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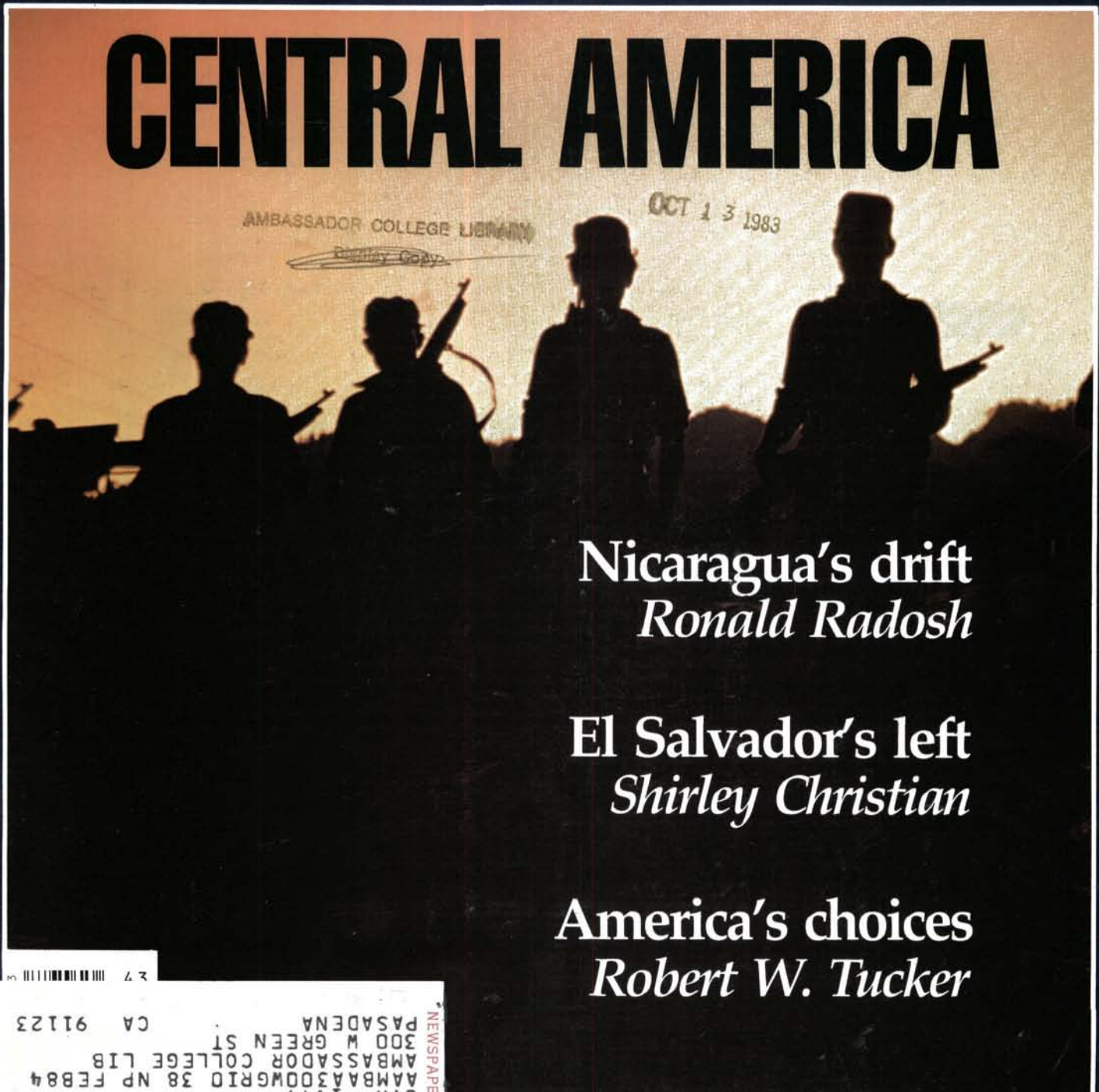
Special Issue

THE NEW REPUBLIC

CENTRAL AMERICA



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NEWSPAPER

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CORRESPONDENCE

HERSH VS. KISSINGER

To the editors:

Martin Peretz's article "Unreliable Sources" (TNR, September 12) commits factual errors and uses questionable logic to denigrate *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* by Seymour Hersh. Mr. Peretz starts off by complaining that, although Hersh claims to have conducted "more than one thousand interviews" for his book, "only a few handfuls of the individuals interviewed are actually identified." I went back to the book and actually counted. The notes to chapter one not only identify twelve separate interviewees (in the order listed: Richard Allen, Max Kampelman, Daniel Davidson, Paul Warnke, Morton Halperin, John Negroponte, John Mitchell, Anna Chennault, Edward Rozek, William Buckley, Frank Shakespeare, and Carl Kaysen), but also cite as sources seven books, assorted newspaper articles, and one book review. The notes to chapter two identify seven interviewees.

Most of Mr. Peretz's article is taken up with a discussion of Biafra. He focuses on Hersh's treatment of this issue as the chief example of the book's reliance on "unreliable sources" and then asks a rhetorical question: "If this treatment is typical—and why shouldn't it be—then is there anything in Hersh's account that shouldn't be suspect?" Put aside the unfairness of judging Hersh's book as a whole on the basis of a few pages about Biafra (only 5, or less than 1 percent, of a 640-page work). Mr. Peretz does not cite one factual inaccuracy in Hersh's account of Kissinger's views and actions.

The only substantive disagreement expressed by Mr. Peretz with Hersh is over whether Kissinger could or should have done more. Mr. Peretz, noting that "Kissinger had not yet consolidated his power" and was still "just another Harvard professor in government," suggests that the former National Security Adviser did all that one could reasonably expect. Hersh's judgment is much harsher: that, although Kissinger wanted U.S. policy to change, he was unwilling to confront the State Department, partly in order to avoid alienating Elliot Richardson, then Under Secretary and his bureaucratic ally.

Hersh cites the following account from Roger Morris, then on Kissinger's staff with responsibility for Biafra. In May, 1969, Kissinger declined to pursue Nixon's suggestion that the United States explore how to recognize Biafra. Two months later, Kissinger received a Presidential order to take steps to enable the United States to mediate the Biafran civil war. Instead of taking personal responsibility for the initiative, Kissinger sent Morris to meet with Biafran officials and declined to provide him with instructions or other support. Shortly thereafter, Elliot Richardson complained to Kissinger about Morris's meeting with the Biafrans as contrary to U.S. policy. Instead of confronting their disagreement over that policy and seeking a resolution that might have resulted in U.S. famine relief, Kissinger told Richardson that Morris had acted without authorization and would be reprimanded.

If this account is correct, then is it unreasonable to ask why Kissinger did not do more, or to speculate that his own ambition may be the answer? The critical question, therefore, is the accuracy of Morris's story of instances when Kissinger might have done more, but chose not to. In the introduction to his notes, Hersh writes that information provided by sources was "cross-checked and verified."

It should have been easy for Mr. Peretz to at least try to cross-check and verify Morris's account (as Hersh says he did) with former Nixon Administration officials. Instead, Mr. Peretz engages in an *ad hominem* attack on Morris, castigating him as an obviously unreliable source, and damns Hersh for using him. This raises an interesting question: If Morris is so clearly not to be trusted, why did TNR print so many of his articles over the past six years and at one point list him as contributing editor?

STEPHEN COHEN
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Peretz replies:

Mr. Cohen is wrong on every count. Rather than having "printed so many" of Roger Morris's "articles over the past six years," it's almost five years since we've printed one. He is no longer pub-

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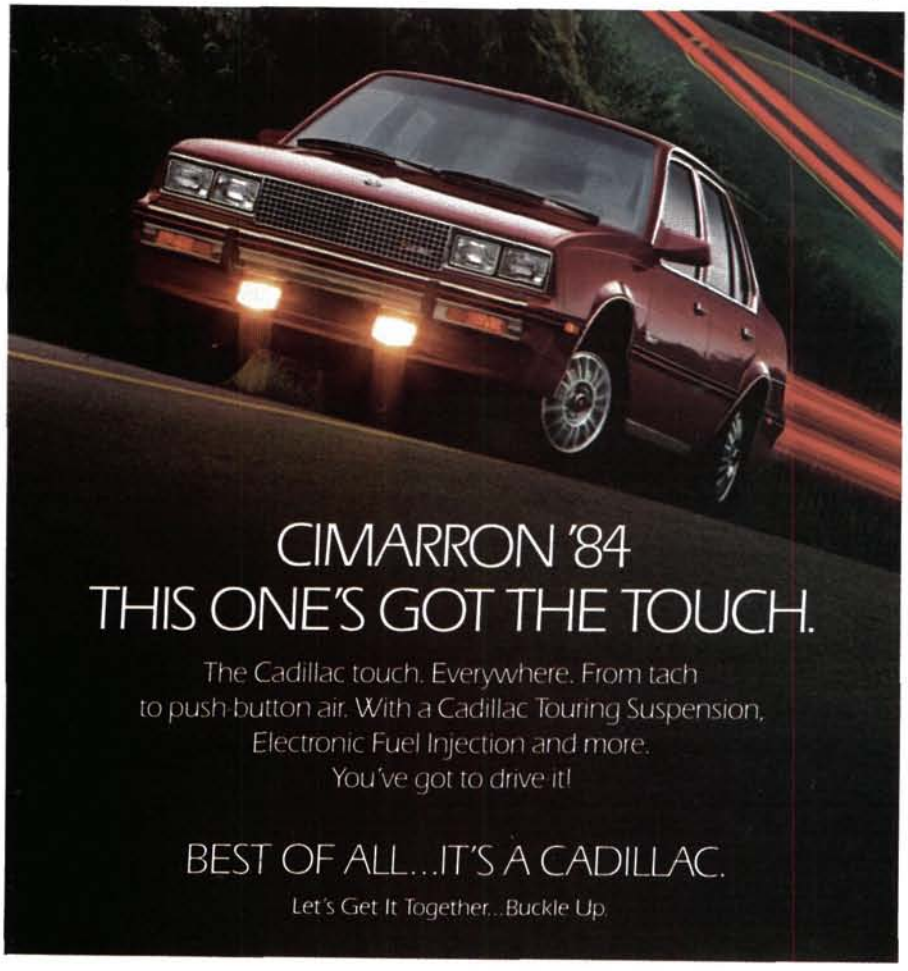
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COVER Photo of Sandinista militia in Matagalpa Province (Montes/Gamma Liaison).

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE TRB FIFTY-NINE

Numerous country club verities have been celebrated and enshrined in public policy during the Reagan years. The most cherished of these concern the role of rich people. Two truths in particular were being suppressed by envious partisans in the liberal media until the rich and their own partisans burst out of the locker rooms and onto the streets.

First, it's darned hard to get rich. It requires grit, stamina, creativity, and daring. Second, the rich contribute more to the economy than they take out, so the more they flourish, the better it is for the country. "That is the function of the rich," explained George Gilder in his influential 1981 book, *Wealth and Poverty*: "fostering opportunities for the classes below them in the continuing drama of the creation of wealth and progress." The scales have fallen from Congress's eyes. It has rushed to aid the rich by cutting their taxes and inheritance duties.

It's true enough that prosperity is good for everyone, not just the rich. It's even true that a properly functioning capitalist economy should encourage people to try to get rich. But it doesn't follow that all of the rich in our real-life economy deserve their wealth, either in the sense of having earned it, or in the sense of having acquired it in ways that contribute to general prosperity. And it also doesn't follow that indiscriminate coddling of the rich is sensible government policy. You have to ask which of these geese really lay golden eggs.

The nation's fattest geese are on display in the current issue of *Forbes* magazine, in its second annual compilation of the 400 richest people in America. Each is worth more than $125 million, including Malcolm S. Forbes, the magazine's owner and editor, who crows in an editorial: "The four hundred, individually and in toto, are living proof that the system works." If he means by this that "the system" has given 400 people the virtually unlimited ability to sate their material desires, he's right. If he means we're all better off as a result, the answer is more complicated. If he means that the "Forbes 400" vindicates the Horatio Alger legend of orphaned bootblacks climbing to the top on spunk, spittle, and a smile, he should have done some subtraction, as I have.

First of all, let's subtract those who made their money the old-fashioned way, by being born into it. *Forbes* reports that 134 of the 400 "inherited great wealth," but by my count it's more like 204—over half. We may disagree about the meaning of the word "great." My count doesn't even include people who inherited money and then infused it with new entrepreneurial energy, such as Fred Smith, who took $3.2 million of his father's money and turned it into Federal Express, or Malcolm Forbes himself, who revived a profitable but moribund magazine.

Of the 196 remaining super-rich, about 45 got there by ownership of gas, oil, and real estate. Once again, I'm not counting active real estate developers like Gerald Hines (who built much of downtown Houston), or various oil barons who took big risks and suffered dry holes before hitting a gusher. These 45 are people with John Jacob Astor's philosophy: "Hold onto the land. Let udders improve." Getting rich by simply owning natural resources may be a matter of luck or even a matter of skill, but it adds nothing to the commonweal. Indeed, as Henry George demonstrated in *Progress and Poverty* (the 1880 classic George Gilder's title alludes to), allowing great wealth to accumulate in dead assets like land actually makes the country less prosperous, not more so.

So we're down to 151 of the Forbes 400 who seem to have arrived there by approximate dint of their own efforts. Of these, though, at least 22 are almost purely "paper entrepreneurs." That is, they are wheeler-dealers who got rich buying and selling companies and bits of companies, while contributing little or nothing to the actual creation of goods and services (and jobs). Most of

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"Criminal policy that is bold but not belligerent, firm but not inflexible."
—MARVIN E. WOLFGANG, New York Times Book Review

This description of the first edition of the book that changed the way we look at crime is equally appropriate for the revised and updated version. Using new data to refine and illuminate his points, James Q. Wilson continues to challenge ideologues of both the right and the left with the kind of careful, empirical analysis that marks him as "America's leading academic authority on crime." *—Washington Post*

Peter Vandermark

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
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THE DEBATE

The present debate about Central America seems to be a debate between American idealisms. There are those who are for a military solution to the instabilities south of the border, and those who are for a social and economic solution; those who are for elections as the means of making governments, and those who are for negotiations; those who are for dealing with revolutions, and those who are for destroying them—but they all speak a lofty language, they all come before the American people with idealistic idioms and protest that the proliferation of democracy in the hemisphere is their final purpose. It is obvious that democracy in Central America is a worthy ambition. It is not obvious, at least to us, that there is any sure or easy way to it. That is how talk about democracy differs from doing something about it. Talk there is, and a good deal of it; so much, indeed, that it is often difficult in this great national discussion to tell idealism from rhetoric. A respect for reality is what distinguishes idealism from rhetoric. Idealism may be responsible; rhetoric rarely is. For idealism to become responsible, however, it must be exposed to the full rudeness of the facts. The facts about Central America are particularly rude. We have been struck by their resistance to any simple analysis or pat prescription for policy. The region has a wealth of woes, and all contribute to its crisis. If this crisis is to be resolved in part by American policy, American policymakers must learn to be patient with all of the problems. The essays that follow in this special issue do not come to confident conclusions about what must be done. Instead, their authors attempt to present a more detached historical and political evaluation of some of the more pressing problems. None of them believes in Central American miracles.

Speaking philosophically, democracy is an absolute. It is for all men and women in all places at all times. Speaking historically, however, democracy has been the consequence of certain social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. The primary fact about Central America, the rudest reality in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras, is that the proper conditions for the development of democracy do not yet exist, nor will they exist for some time to come. Under Secretary of Defense Fred C. Iklé, in his uninhibited address to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs last month, was decidedly too sanguine about the "trend toward democratization" in the region. This does not mean, to be sure, that Leninism is a law of Central American history, or that the United States should forsake its concern for the reform of these countries for more of the fatalism that has marred its policy toward much of the third world. But the stubborn structures of tyranny in these places must be faced squarely. They are not places that can rely upon intellectual or institutional traditions of freedom. Such traditions must all be created, as they were earlier in Europe and the United States. They were not created from nothing. In exalting and explaining the rise of democracy in America, for example, Tocqueville cited what he called its "equality of conditions." Nothing like such equality may be found, however, in Central America, where society is generally divided into a mass of peasants marooned in poverty and a mean and mighty oligarchy that controls the tills, and the tools of terror. The

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economies of these countries are primarily agricultural, with almost all the land held by almost none of the population. The industrial economies that do exist are young, and have not yet produced a sufficiently large middle class to make the demands for political rights or a sufficiently large working class to make the demand for economic rights. (The middle class of El Salvador, for example, owes its existence to coffee—that is, to the continuation of the present system of agricultural exploitation; and the remainder of its middle class, though it has produced the Christian Democrats, a genuine party of civil liberties and reform, has not been strong enough to sustain its party in political life.)

THE FANTASTIC POVERTY of the region might be less of an obstacle to the development of democracy if the people in power had more of a conscience about the state of freedom in their countries. Unfortunately the rulers in Central America (we except noble and nervous Costa Rica from this) consist of different sorts of repressors. The indifference of military juntas to the Jeffersonian ideal is famous; some of the countries of Central America have been transformed by their own authorities into charnel houses. Less famous is the indifference of revolutionary juntas to this ideal—and in the case of Nicaragua, we note in fairness, less bloody, too. Still, the notion that democracy is a likely consequence of revolution is ridiculous. Too many revolutions have betrayed too many promises for us to pretend about them any longer. The Nicaraguan revolution, as Ronald Radosh reports (see "Darkening Nicaragua," p. 7), may be among them; and the Salvadoran revolution, as Shirley Christian reports (see "The Other Side," p. 13), is not a revolution at all, but a war for power by a military force among whose more potent weapons is the language of liberation. Despite the terrific ideological and political distances that divide them, the colonels and the commissars of Central America have this in common—they are in the business of power, not in the business of justice. And the democrats of the region are dispersed in both camps, all of them betting on the better sides of the otherwise sinister forces they sit with, because they have no natural political home.

The political primitivity of Central America has implications for American policy. It means, as Robert W. Tucker explains (see "Their Wars, Our Choices," p. 22), that the United States will have to abandon the fantasy of a quick fix that puts everything right. A military operation in any one of these countries will not end their misery, though there is a place for American military assistance; and neither will another year of land reform and industrial growth, though there is a place for American social and economic assistance; and neither will an election, though there is a place for American political assistance. Democracy in Central America will take generations. For the foreseeable future, in short, we will be dealing with more or less undemocratic regimes. This is not exactly a counsel of despair, but it should sober up the discussion. That discussion will continue for a long time. (Our own contributions to it in coming weeks will include articles by Mortimer B. Zuckerman and Robert A. Dahl, among others.)

The solution for the long run is much clearer than the solution for the short run. For the long run a serious and sustained attempt to end the economic misery and social suffering of the region must be made—a Caribbean Basin Initiative, and maybe a Marshall Plan. As Rivarol said to Louis XVI, but too late, "If one wishes to avoid the horrors of a revolution, one must will it and make it oneself." For the short run, a way must be found to keep the Russians out of the region without aggravating the resentment that already (and justifiably) exists about the history of American intervention there. This has thoughtful people understandably vexed. It is not at all clear precisely how the United States can succeed at the global level without losing at the regional level. If the United States goes about its own security in a way that sets it against the peoples of these places, it will gain nothing; but it must go about it. If it acts against the dictators of these places in a way that brings new dictators to power, it will gain nothing; but it must act against them. Anybody with an easy answer is a fool.

THE KISSINGER Commission is about to visit Central America—a courtesy call to a place without courtesy. It will probably be shown a lot of the good news and none of the bad. There are some who say that the commission was created to provide a distinguished endorsement of the Administration's present emphasis upon the military instruments of policy. Henry Kissinger is one of the great geopoliticists in our history, and he can be counted upon to consider the strategic dimensions of the problem very carefully. Nor is such a consideration beside the point; there are Cubans in Nicaragua, even if Nicaragua is not Cuba. The social instabilities of developing countries are indeed imperial opportunities for the Soviet Union. Russians rush in where angels fear to tread. Still, the Russians will be forever robbed of such opportunities only by social, economic, and political change. Mr. Kissinger fully understands this. He has spoken of American "misunderstanding" of Latin America, of our "underestimating the psychological weight of history" in having "often sought to decide unilaterally what should be done about inter-American relations." He has described one of the priorities of American policy as a desire "to negotiate on the basis of parity and dignity our specific differences with each and every state—both bilaterally and, where possible, multilaterally." Mr. Kissinger's recommendations to Mr. Reagan will no doubt influence the President's perceptions of the problem. Mr. Kissinger can score some political points. But he can also do more: he can interpret history for the highest levels of power. His commission presents him with a chance to make the full complexity of the Central American problem credible to the President and to the citizens of this country. A commission that flies to Central America only to drink wine and look for communists will cast little light upon the deepening darkness.

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Still not totalitarian, but the drift is disturbing.

DARKENING NICARAGUA

BY RONALD RADOSH

AMERICANS seem to have two conflicting impressions of revolutionary Nicaragua. One impression—the one you get from Ronald Reagan, or from books like Max Singer's *Nicaragua: The Stolen Revolution*—is of a highly developed variant of Stalinism, an all-powerful state run on pure terror. The other impression comes from opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America, such as the editors of *The Boston Globe*, who see Nicaragua as a "serious, popular, mostly well-intentioned and frequently competent national experiment not altogether unlike our own revolution."

A visit reveals something more complex than either of these skewed portraits. Nicaragua is a society increasingly militarized and polarized, defined for the average person by the daily ration lines for the most necessary commodities—soap, toilet paper, gasoline. It is also a nation in which the heralded promises of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (F.S.L.N.)—to build a revolution based on political pluralism, a mixed economy, and international nonalignment—have been replaced by a slow but clear movement toward a Cuban-style regime.

Yet Nicaragua seems to be moving in two contradictory directions at once. A group of non-Sandinista Nicaraguan politicians, supporters of the revolution but members of opposition parties, recently traveled to Europe to draw up a report on the parliamentary system in France, Sweden, Spain, and Finland. The avowed purpose was to report back on the parliamentary process so that the revolution can create a meaningful democratic system. At the same time, Sandinista leaders lash out at "bourgeois" democracy and point to the supposedly higher democracy they are building—symbolized by such institutions as the new revolutionary tribunals for detecting and trying counterrevolutionaries.

These leaders speak with evident pride of the work of the Committees to Defend Sandinismo (C.D.S.), the local block associations which not only carry out administrative tasks but also organize militants to spy on neighbors suspected of various deviations—shirking on the job, reading *La Prensa*, preferring to join the non-Sandinista trade unions. Since access to ration cards—and therefore to state-controlled supplies—is a perk of belonging to the local C.D.S., even the stiffest opponent of the regime has to think twice before refusing to affiliate.

How Sandinista-style democracy works is most visible at the biweekly "face the people" sessions. At each such meeting, a few of the nine *commandantes*, along with other government officials, appear in a different neighborhood to speak before the people and to hear their complaints. On one hot and humid night recently, Daniel Ortega, chief of state, and Sergio Ramírez, coordinator of the governing junta, led the list of prominent officials who presided at a meeting in a suburb of Managua. For two hours before they arrived, the crowd of several hundred was exhorted to chant revolutionary slogans by a small band of young militants, who at this particular session were not facing a receptive audience. They walked in front of nonparticipants with a megaphone, insisting that they join in. *"Loud so the Pentagon will hear,"* they admonished the audience.

Listening to their chants, I thought of the trenchant critique of the left-wing Honduran writer Rodolfo Pastor,

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Ronald Radosh, co-author with Joyce Milton of *The Rosenberg File* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston), is a co-editor of *El Salvador: Central America and the New Cold War* (Grove Press) and editor of *The New Cuba: Paradoxes and Potentials* (William Morrow).

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who pointed out in *Dissent*'s 1982 collection of essays on Central America that Nicaragua's armed-camp mentality creates an atmosphere "in which the highest civic virtue is submission to discipline and the worst sin is open political disagreement." This, Pastor writes, "is the antithesis to the revolutionary spirit of criticism, so that to defend it as revolutionary is contradictory nonsense." Pastor, I thought, would have found confirmation for his thesis in the words of the most popular chant: *"National Directorate: Order Us What To Do!"* Another chant celebrated the hooliganism of the *turbas*, the Sandinistas' quasi-legal goon squads that mobilize to attack unwelcome dissenters. *"We are mobs,"* the militants chanted, *"so what?"*

AS THE chanting subsided, Commandante Ortega opened with a brief talk. He began by attacking Alfonso Robelo and Edén Pastora—the ex-Sandinista officials who lead A.R.D.E. (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance), the Costa Rica-based rebels—as C.I.A. stooges. This marked a tactical shift for the Directorate, which formerly responded to Pastora's threat by trying to forbid any mention of him. (*La Prensa* was even ordered to avoid the use of the word "zero," lest it be interpreted as an illusion to Pastora, whose *nom de guerre* was Commandante Cero.) But now that Pastora has decided to open a second front and to seek C.I.A. aid, Ortega and his colleagues think they have an advantage in the propaganda war against him.

Ortega went on to blame the deaths of two American journalists, Richard Cross and Dial Torgerson, on Ronald Reagan. How, he asked, could the Hondurans, acting on behalf of the United States, have allowed them to travel on a border road without protection from their soldiers? When U.S. journalists went to the same area on the Nicaraguan side, he said, they got protection from the militia, some of whom died in the battle to save the journalists from an ambush. Then Ortega greeted the "North American journalists." There were four or five of us attending the meeting, and we shifted uneasily in our seats as he assured the audience we were "100 percent in support of the revolution."

Finally it was the turn of "the people" to speak. A woman stood up. She began by reading a written statement: her community supported the revolution, she understood the need to have food and equipment for the boys at the front, it was her patriotic wish that the attempt of American imperialism to defeat the revolution be set back. With a brief pause for breath, she added: "So why can't we have cooking oil? We've gone five whole weeks without it."

One of Ortega's aides, apparently the appropriate official, answered. The government, he assured her, would look into it. By the very next week, he promised, things were going to be better. Her neighborhood would get 60 percent of what it requested. Sugar, rice, and soap would be made available, as well as cooking oil every eight to ten days.

The next questioner also knew that Nicaragua's problems were due to a war forced upon it from outside. She too favored resolute action to defeat the *contras*, and she praised the Directorate for its leadership. But the nearby primary school was so overcrowded. Couldn't the government build them a new one? A minister said he would look into it, and that she should form a committee and come to the Ministry of Education with a concrete proposal.

So it went. Later in the evening, when one man revealed a hostile tone, the militants began to chant: *"Confiscate! Confiscate! Confiscate!"* Daniel Ortega responded that the government functioned according to laws, that a person's property could not be taken away simply because the revolutionaries disapproved of his or her attitude.

The Nicaraguan people now have an institutionalized mechanism for talking directly to their top leaders. But the relationship between people and leaders was more feudal than revolutionary: the lord dispensing justice in return for loyalty. Nor did the intimidating atmosphere encourage dissent. The meetings are largely symbolic—theatrical productions designed to dramatize the government's concern for and closeness to the people. They are hardly a substitute for institutions of representative democracy, through which a people can freely debate and define their country's course.

THE RISKS OF FREEDOM

Nevertheless, people find ways of expressing their feelings. One safe way is through the Catholic Church. Merely to support the traditional Church has become per se an act critical of the regime. The Sandinistas, despite their own nominal devotion to Catholicism (Commandante Tomás Borge adorns his office with a personal collection of crucifixes), have created this situation. In response to the coolness toward the Sandinistas of Archbishop Obando y Bravo—who had supported the overthrow of Somoza—pro-Sandinista priests created the "Popular Church," a minuscule sect seeking to blend Catholicism and Marxism along the lines of the new liberation theology. Pope John Paul II attacked these priests, two of whom hold major government posts, as "absurd and dangerous"—a comment that automatically turned defenders of the traditional Church into critics of the government.

When the Pope was met with catcalls and revolutionary slogans, most Nicaraguans were offended by the reception afforded a religious leader they revered. The Sandinistas, for their part, were scandalized that the Pope refused to say mass for the dead of the Popular Militia, killed in the fight against the *contras*. Why, Father Arvello Argüello of the Popular Church asked me, did the Pope refuse the pleas made to him by mothers of the dead? The archbishop, of course, sees the issue in a different light. The Pope, he argues, "prayed for all who died," and will not engage in propaganda for political reasons.

It is a perfect standoff. The archbishop proclaims that he and the Pope refuse to be politicians. The Sandinistas

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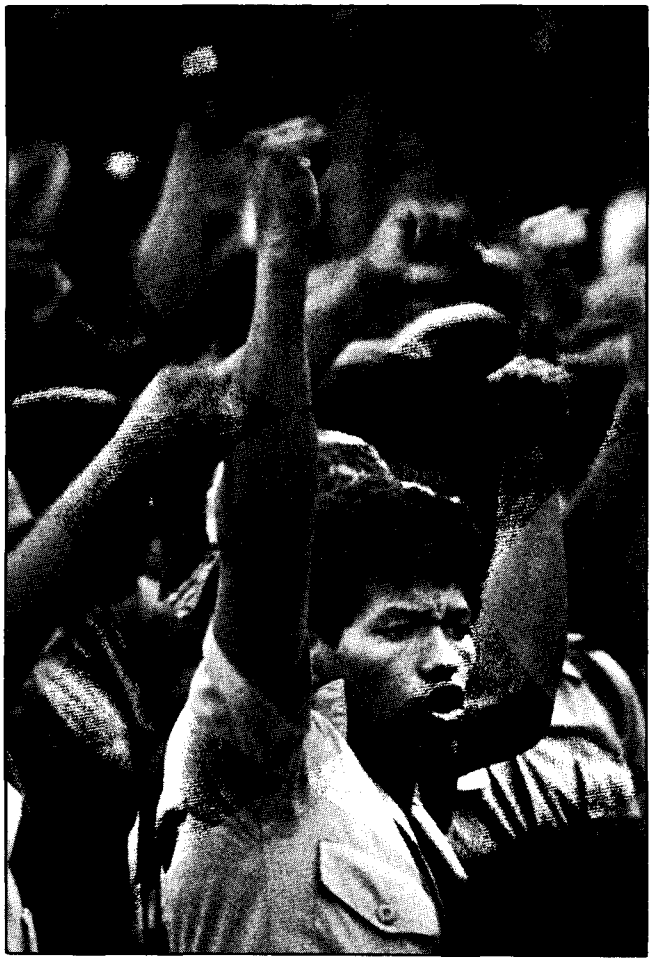
retort that the archbishop is indeed playing politics—using the Church to create a center for a political opposition. The charge in fact does have some merit. To back the Church in the context of the Nicaraguan revolution is to oppose the F.S.L.N. Since this is the case, it is a shock to see the image of the Holy Father and the Pope displayed throughout the country and pasted in storefronts, offices, and on the shacks of the poorest dwellers of Managua's *barrios*. Yet it is a relatively safe form of criticism. Having proclaimed themselves devout Catholics, the Sandinistas cannot afford to do anything but tolerate the outpouring of love for the Pope and the Church.

For those who seek a window on a reality other than that defined by the Sandinistas, there is one remaining outlet, *La Prensa*. Under the stewardship of its martyred editor, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Sr., who was assassinated in 1978, it had become the focal point of opposition to Somoza—who had his national guard bomb the newspaper's plant. The Sandinistas prefer to deal with *La Prensa*'s independence by censorship and occasional closings—the latest occurring in August for publishing a story about the *turba* stoning of the home of Chamorro's widow. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Jr., the murdered editor's oldest son, exudes great warmth and charm. Exuberant and handsome, he manages to edit the paper and to survive each day's indignities with a keen sense of humor. For the time being, the paper is a symbol that the revolution can't afford to eliminate. And it continues to publish, within the constraints imposed by the Sandinistas, proudly proclaiming its slogan on each day's front page: "Without a Free Press, There Is No Freedom."



SANDINISTA PEOPLES MILITIA MEMBERS ATTEND RALLY IN MANAGUA (D. LEESON/NEW ORLEANS TIMES-PICAYUNE)

The government's spokesmen like to argue that censorship is a necessity imposed on them by the demands of national security in wartime. Chamorro responds with dozens of examples that undercut that claim. *La Prensa* was forbidden to run a story on rotted food on market shelves because the food was imported from Bulgaria. An article on the music of a noted Nicaraguan artist, who was attempting to create what he had called a "national" music, was censored on the grounds that it would harm the public's appreciation of Cuba, which happened to have musicians touring Nicaragua at that time. And *La Prensa* has been forbidden to run dispatches on Soviet action in Afghanistan, on Sweden's hostile reaction to Soviet subs in their waters, and on domestic happenings that might weaken appreciation for the Sandinistas.

Immediately before the Emergency Law of December 1981—the statute that among other things established the censor's bureau—*La Prensa* had printed the verbatim text of a letter, not intended for publication, that had been sent to the media by the communications minister, Frederico López. It described how the press should deal with what López termed a "delicate situation," his euphemism for the imposition of martial law in Poland. The directive stressed the need to neutralize "anti-Sovietism," and the appearance of any false analogies between Poland and Nicaragua. Clearly the regime worried about identification by the people with Solidarity—and with the concept of strikes and independent unionism. López asked that the issue be treated "dialectically," meaning that the only stories to be printed were those from the Cuban press agency Prensa Latina or from Tass, the official Soviet press agency.

The censorship is tight. Yet in another of the curious lacunae that mark the Sandinista system, the latest censored stories are tacked up on the bulletin board outside the paper's office, where the curious can read them.

La Prensa has not yet been closed, Chamorro says, "because the cost is too high to do so." How would it look, he asks, if they closed down a paper that they already censored? "Freedom means risk," Chamorro says. And he takes that risk, even though it has led at least once to the appearance at his own home in the middle of the night of *turbas*—who chanted and painted his house with slogans accusing him of being a C.I.A. agent.

But the opposition to *La Prensa* is getting stronger, and one of the toughest advocates of suppression is Pedro Joaquín's younger brother, Carlos Fernando Chamorro, who, at age twenty-six, is editor of the official Sandinista paper, *Barricada*. Unlike Pedro, Carlos is introspective and shy. He seemed to me to be weighing each word, and to be more concerned with maintaining a correct political line than with engaging in anything approaching spontaneous conversation. *Barricada* is itself a poor imitation of Fidel

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Castro's *Granma*, which in turn is a Caribbean version of *Pravda*, albeit livelier. *Barricada*'s pages are filled with exhortations to serve the revolution, stories from the front or from the fields meant to build up patriotic fervor, and attacks on the provocations emanating from Honduras and Washington.

Sitting in his large, comfortable office, Carlos Chamorro defined for me what he saw as the role of the press in Nicaragua—that of a mechanism for forging a national identity needed to build the revolution. In a revolutionary state, he argued, the press cannot be "above society," holding a larger interest of its own. Any criticism must be of a "constructive" nature—not the kind that helps build counterrevolutionary sentiment.

But why press censorship? I asked. "We are not living in normal times," Chamorro responded, but are in the midst of a "cruel and dangerous war." He went on to argue for the necessity to close down *La Prensa*. In Nicaragua, he told me, there is "no essential need to hear the other point of view." *La Prensa* "serves no purpose in the revolutionary process."

That *La Prensa* still publishes is testimony to the Sandinistas' need to retain sympathy in Western Europe. And not all Sandinista leaders share Carlos Chamorro's outlook. The new vice minister of the interior, Moisés Hassán, a former junta member and minister of construction, gave me his personal view that the existence of armed aggression should not in theory keep his country from developing pluralism. Hassán firmly declared that a democratic revolution needs an institutionalized voice of opposition. Only those who actively undertake to support counterrevolution, he said, should have their liberties curtailed.

The Anemic Opposition

Those liberties appear to be in growing jeopardy—perhaps, as former Ambassador Arturo Cruz puts it in the summer issue of *Foreign Affairs*, because so many "extreme leftist radicals consider dissent as treason." Yet dissent still does exist in Nicaragua. It centers around the Coordinadora Democrática—the formal coordinating body to which the opposition political parties belong, except for the Democratic Conservative Party, which wants no part of any Sandinista-approved structure. These parties—the Social Christian Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Liberal Constitutionalist Party, along with the pro-government parties which belong to the Patriotic Front, are currently debating a new electoral law for Nicaragua, which allows the parties to "aspire to power," but only as long as they agree to accept "the basic principles of the Sandinista Revolution."

Adán Fletes, head of the Social Christian Party, sits in his party's ramshackle office in a lower-middle-class neighborhood of Managua. It is adorned with a giant photo of the Pope and posters of European and Latin American Christian Democratic leaders. Fletes says, "Nicaragua is not a totalitarian state. But it is not a democracy either." People are scared to join his party, which has been the victim of a few attacks by the *turbas*. Its goals, he says, are the same as during the Somoza era: free elections, better conditions, and democracy.

Fletes's party holds nine seats in the Council of State, a fifty-one-seat administrative body with no real political power, which reviews laws proposed by the junta. The governing junta and the *commandantes* are the real authority. Nevertheless the Christian Democrats try valiantly to participate in the electoral commission, despite false arrests and harassment of its members. Fletes insists he will stay and work in his country as a Nicaraguan patriot. "As long as we are here," he says, "the F.S.L.N. can't have total control. We occupy a space they cannot fill."

OTHERS IN the opposition are harsher. Miriam Argüello, a businesswoman, is now the head of the Democratic Conservative Party. Its previous chief, Adolfo Calero, fled to join the F.D.N. (Nicaraguan Democratic Front) executive in Honduras. The party's headquarters are located in the very heart of Sandinista Managua, a few blocks from the security forces' new interrogation center. The conservatives have one distinct advantage. They are the repository of money from the old elite, and they can use those funds to purchase billboard space on the streets and highways. The result is unexpectedly jarring. Next to Sandinista billboards proclaiming ARMS TO THE PEOPLE, one is likely to find the dictum NICARAGUA IS DINER'S CLUB COUNTRY, and, most surprisingly, SUPPORT CONSERVATIVES: FOR GOD, ORDER, AND LIBERTY.

The conservatives are the preferred party of the old established *burguesía*. Despite this, and despite the defection to the *contras* of their previous chief, the Sandinistas still allow them to publish and distribute their monthly newsletter, *La Marcha*, which routinely makes strong attacks on the government. A summer issue blazoned on its front page the headline CONSERVATIVE PARTY DENOUNCES PERSECUTION. The February issue condemned what it called the "sacrilege" committed by the Sandinista hecklers of the Pope.

Unlike Fletes, Miriam Argüello claims that Nicaragua is already "totalitarian." The electoral law debate is only a façade, she says, to allow the country to be dominated by Marxist-Leninists. Her party refuses to take part in the Council of State or to work in the electoral commission. The government, she says, confiscates private property, attacks the Church, and teaches Marxism-Leninism to schoolchildren. "It has only a pretense of pluralism." Yet that pretense includes her freedom to sit in her party's office and expound her critical views forcefully to any and all who are willing to listen. Indeed, in August her party was allowed to hold its first political convention since the revolution.

Argüello insists that the conservatives are patriots whose hopes for a decent future were dashed by the leftward course taken by the Sandinistas. Her role, Argüello says, is to lead the "struggle against totalitarianism," and to develop "civil resistance" to Sandinista

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policy—a position that gives some support to the government's charge that some of the opposition parties are close to advocating counterrevolution. Argüello argues that she seeks only to use "the last space of liberty available" to save her country from a new and disastrous civil war. But she answered a question about the *contras* by stating that all she knows about them is that they are composed of Nicaraguans who favor a "democratic alternative" to Marxism-Leninism. When asked if she did not think that the F.D.N. leadership was composed of Somocistas and ex-*Guardia*, she responded: "We know only that they are Nicaraguans searching for the freedom of their country."

Other members of her party with whom I talked were neither as certain nor as hopeless. A prominent conservative leader, who asked not to be named, saw real democracy in Central America as the only possible way to defeat the Sandinistas. An end to military rule in Guatemala, he argued, would hurt the propaganda of the Sandinistas more than anything else. Sitting on the man's bookshelf, I noticed, was a pamphlet I had previously spotted on sale at the Intercontinental Hotel's bookstand. It was a blistering critique of Marxism written by a conservative intellectual, Dr. Emilio Alvarez Montalván. Updated for the recent centenary of Marx's birth, the booklet disputes the claim that Marxism is a science, and accuses Marxism of subordinating man to the state. I was told it was a key educational document used by the conservatives to educate their young people. That such a pamphlet could still be printed and sold in Nicaragua said a great deal. The book, clearly, is not the kind of publication one could find in Castro's Cuba—to say nothing of any of the Eastern bloc communist countries.

Unions Under Siege

Freedom to read is a key component of a democratic system. So is the political space allowed representatives of the working class. The Sandinistas are worried that in a disintegrating economy in the midst of war, strikes for higher wages might exacerbate economic chaos, and even lead to a collapse of the government. To contain labor, the Sandinistas have moved to create their own trade union federation. That step has put them into immediate conflict with already established trade unions affiliated with the Christian Democrats, and even with one union led by the old-line Nicaraguan Communists.

The regime sees independent unions as potentially dangerous, and strikes as part of a C.I.A. attempt to destabilize Nicaragua. The latter fear is not unfounded, given past C.I.A. attempts to use American-backed unions in this manner. Legitimate grievances by Nicaraguan workers are almost automatically viewed as suspect, and patriotic union leaders find themselves considered potentially subversive. The Sandinista union federation attempts to deal with this by seeking bargaining rights previously held by unions such as the C.T.N. (Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers) or the C.U.S. (Trade Union Committee for Unification).

The minister of labor, Virgilio Godoy, denies charges of harassment, and claims that his ministry is "impartial and neutral." All workers complain about the sacrifices they have to make, he says, and he hopes that patriotism will lead them to understand that strikes can only worsen the economic situation. The real problem with the C.U.S. and C.T.N., Godoy says, is that "sometimes they act as a union, but other times they act as a political party." Only then does the ministry have to move against them.

That response makes union leaders bristle. Augustín Rodriguez, a C.T.N. leader, explained to me how workers seeking representation from C.T.N. are fired from their jobs, and how C.D.S. block committees threaten neighbors who are known to favor C.T.N. as their union. He also noted that their organizers have been arrested and are serving sentences ranging from six months to ten years—for the crime of trying to organize strikes.

THE C.T.N.'S goal, he says, is Western-style social democracy. "We reject both capitalism and Marxism-Leninism." In Sandinista Nicaragua, despite Rodriguez's claim that his union is not political, that goal is of course a stance of political opposition. Rodriguez showed me a photo of Carlos Huembes, the union president, after he had been beaten up at the airport upon his return from a trip abroad. His head was bandaged and bloodied. Other photos Rodriguez displayed showed *turbas*—the Nicaraguan variant of 1930s American goon squads—using lead pipes to bash the heads of workers at a C.T.N. demonstration.

It is not surprising that in the face of such provocation, the C.T.N. has chosen to denounce Nicaragua's political course. Yet the Sandinistas allowed them to hold a national convention in 1982, at which the union passed a declaration accusing the government of "stealing the victory [over Somoza] from the people." While the C.T.N. manifesto rejected attempts to "destabilize the current regime via armed struggle," thus rejecting the *contras*, it stressed that they would not let up in their opposition to the "harassment and violation of the rights and freedoms of those who pretend to replace the old Somocista dictatorship with a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship."

Bayardo López Pineder, secretary-general of C.U.S., says pointedly that the workers, "not the F.S.L.N., are the country." Yet he maintains that this view is not political, and he stresses that C.U.S. takes part in the Council of State—an official body—and that it is not opposed to the revolution. "Our only goal," he claims, is that "working people gain control of the political process."

That position, of course, implies that working people are not in control now—and the Sandinistas see their government as at one with all the workers. López goes on to cite common grievances of his membership. How can workers be expected to live, he asks me, when inflation is over 300 percent? And he mocks the *commandantes* for living in the mansions of exiled *burguesía*, and for driving around in Mercedes Benzes. So far, the Sandinistas have

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not eliminated these unions—something Fidel Castro did at an early stage in Cuba's revolution. "Our presence and struggle here," López says, "keep Nicaragua from becoming totalitarian."

Hardening Lines

The war has awakened fierce patriotism and nationalism. Many who might have been in opposition have come to the defense of their country against Yankee-sponsored invading forces—and all Nicaraguans know full well the sorry history of Yankee intervention here. Without doubt, C.I.A. and Reagan Administration support for the *contras* gives more internal leverage to the Sandinista hard-liners, who have all along favored a radicalizing of the country along Cuban lines.

The powerful minister of the interior, Tomás Borge, the sole remaining member of the original F.S.L.N. founders, is said to favor creation of a formal vanguard party, along with tight internal security measures to keep it permanently in control. It was Borge's ministry that closed down *La Prensa* in August. And the war undermines the position of those moderate Sandinistas who favor quick movement toward elections and the development of democratic institutions.

Moisés Hassán, again expressing his "personal view," emphasized to me that a veteran guerrilla fighter like himself did not battle "only to declare that we are turning our country over to some other power," which I took as a clear allusion to the Soviet Union. But Hassán argued that the closing off of economic aid from the West, and cuts in the sugar quota, put his revolution's "original plan to remain nonaligned in danger." Other Sandinista leaders seem less worried about this. "We will never compromise," Borge told me, adding that there is no difference between the revolution the Sandinistas promised and the one they're delivering. Unlike Hassán, Borge seems untroubled by his country's growing tilt toward the Soviets. "We are obliged to take help wherever it comes from," he told me curtly. He claims to be satisfied that his nation is one of the most democratic in Central America. "Our people have arms," he said. "This is the best proof that we are a democracy."

But some people would say that the best proof that Nicaragua is *not* a democracy is the growing number of human rights violations. The situation is not as bleak as it is in Guatemala or El Salvador, where even moderate opponents of the regime are regularly gunned down en masse. Still, the files of Nicaragua's independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights are not encouraging. Xavier A. Cuadra, an editor of a literary-political journal who serves on the commission, claims that there were 540 political prisoners as of summer 1983, and about 90 "disappeared" persons. Most of those, he says, are workers and peasants from the Atlantic Coast, a remote area of the country where support for the government is especially thin. The work of the commission on behalf of political prisoners—an effort it describes as humanitarian and non-political—has led the Sandinistas to condemn it, and to attacks on its members by *turbas*. "When Tomás Borge was in jail and being tortured," Cuadra says with some irony, "we supported him. Now Borge calls us an agency of the C.I.A." But even Cuadra stresses that the Sandinistas do not torture or physically harm their prisoners. What Cuadra and others deplore is what they term "psychological torture"—an atmosphere of intimidation that works to inhibit dissent.

Nicaragua is not the totally closed society many Americans expect to find. For the time being, the opposition parties still exist and manage to function. Their effort to prevent the F.S.L.N. from emerging as a communist vanguard party must be counted a success. Even fierce political opponents have a modicum of personal freedom, and can travel abroad regularly, though they may try to gather political support. Indeed, any Nicaraguan who wants to can leave his country for Miami or elsewhere—although such a decision means giving up his home and wealth in Nicaragua. And the revolution's friends are correct when they point to dramatic successes in the realms of literacy, health care, and agrarian reform.

In some ways Nicaragua today is a good example of one of Jeane Kirkpatrick's "authoritarian" regimes. It is a reforming, modernizing military government that promises elections at some future date and permits the existence of institutions it does not control. The difference, though—and it is not a small one—is the totalitarian ambition of some its leaders. Xavier Cuadra put it this way to me: "The very concept of rights has disappeared in Nicaragua. Rights are now something conceived of as a gift from the authorities. In this sense, the human rights situation is worse than it was during the Somoza years."

"There *is* political space in Nicaragua," a knowledgeable senior Western diplomat here tells me. He notes that the internal tightening up pre-dates the stepped-up activity of the *contras*. But the war has "undoubtedly worked to pull the people together to defend the revolution," and American policy permits the Sandinistas "to pin the rap on the United States."

THE DRIFT toward repression serves to isolate the Sandinistas at home and to give their foreign enemies ammunition to be used against them. For its part, the Reagan Administration claims that its goal is to get Nicaragua to restore democracy and to disentangle itself from the Soviet embrace. But the measures chosen ostensibly to achieve these aims—subsidizing the *contras*' war and economic strangulation—so far have worked to bolster support for the Sandinistas. Each time U.S. policy moves in a more confrontational direction, it damages the waning hopes of those brave Nicaraguans still here who consider themselves patriots and supporters of the revolution—but who reject the strident Marxism of the F.S.L.N. Undermining these forces seems a strange way of promoting democracy in Nicaragua—but at present, for various reasons and due to many factors, the future of democracy in Sandinista Nicaragua seems bleak indeed.

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El Salvador's fractious, frenzied left.

THE OTHER SIDE

BY SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

ONE EVENING last April, Tomás Borge, a member of the nine-man Sandinista directorate, arrived at the suburban Managua home of Salvador Cayetano Carpio, the 63-year-old patriarch of El Salvador's guerrilla movement, with shattering news: security agents working under Borge in the Interior Ministry had gathered conclusive evidence implicating people close to Carpio in the murder the previous week of Mélida Anaya Montes. Anaya Montes had been Carpio's senior deputy in the Popular Liberation Forces (F.P.L.); she had been seeking a negotiated end to the war in El Salvador over his objections. Sometime that evening, Carpio shot himself.

It was two weeks before the F.P.L. revealed Carpio's suicide, saying he had done it out of "revolutionary pain" caused by the circumstances surrounding his comrade's death. But diplomats from several countries with intelligence sources in Managua say Carpio's death occurred "Rommel style," with Borge telling him the choice was between suicide and public revelation of all the names and facts in Anaya Montes's murder, including the possible implication of Carpio himself, and the accompanying damage to the guerrilla movement. If he chose suicide, Borge reportedly told Carpio, the circumstances surrounding the murder of Mélida Anaya Montes would remain an internal affair of the F.P.L.

Borge kept his promise. Although state security officials subsequently announced the arrest of Rogelio Bazzaglia, a young member of the F.P.L. Central Command, and five others, no judicial procedures have been started against them, and it is not known whether they are still in prison or even alive.

The killers slipped into Anaya Montes's home south of Managua in the early morning hours of April 6. They stabbed her eighty-three times with an ice pick, then slit her jugular vein with a knife. Carpio, who was in Libya, rushed home. He arrived on April 9, just in time to go directly to her state funeral, which was held in a hot, dusty market plaza on the outskirts of Managua. There were protestations of grief and anti-imperialist rhetoric, but they masked historic divisions in the Salvadoran left, divisions that had now become of concern to Fidel Castro and to the Sandinistas.

The deaths of Anaya Montes and Carpio grew out of efforts to attain unity, and support for negotiations, among and within the five guerrilla organizations that make up the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (F.M.L.N.). By the time Carpio went to his grave (in an unknown spot in Nicaragua, and without the public tributes given Anaya Montes), he had come to be viewed by his comrades as the chief obstacle to a negotiated settlement—as much or more so than the Reagan Administration. The Sandinistas, themselves besieged by anti-Sandinista guerrillas who have the backing of the United States, had concluded that they would have a better chance of halting these pressures and consolidating their own power if they could promote a negotiated settlement in El Salvador. Along with Castro, they wanted Carpio to turn over the leadership of the guerrilla movement to a younger man more in their line of thinking.

The man chosen to succeed Carpio is Joaquín Villalobos, a 32-year-old former economics student. His path to the top, first of his own guerrilla organization and now of the five-group coalition, has been marked by an expressed willingness to use violence to provoke repression and the deaths of four guerrilla leaders under questionable circumstances. Despite this history, Villalobos is now attempting to show the outside world that he is a reasonable man, and that the guerrilla movement is eager to negotiate and willing to concede more than ever before in working out the kind of government and military structure that might emerge from negotiations. It may be a sincere move or it may be a feint. Given the confusing and bloody history of this movement, even the man who made the proposals may not know.

In many ways, the war in El Salvador is a product of the original split in the Salvadoran left, precipitated by Carpio's decision in 1970 to leave the Moscow-line Salvadoran Communist Party and form a guerrilla band. Since then, the left has been divided by a progression of issues. When Carpio quit the party the issue was armed struggle versus what he disparagingly called bourgeois communism.

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Then it became prolonged struggle, Mao-style, versus broad-based insurrection—the kind of quick kill in which all of the elements who are unhappy with those in power are brought together, as in Nicaragua in 1979.

The success of the insurrection in Nicaragua was much noted by Marxist-Leninist revolutionary groups throughout Latin America, with their penchant for interminable analysis and self-criticism. Until 1979, they had only two examples to study of how Marxist-Leninists could come to power in the Western Hemisphere. One was Cuba, where Castro came to power at the head of a small guerrilla force and seemed destined to last forever. The other was Chile, where Salvador Allende's coalition of socialists and communists came to power in 1970 through elections, only to be ousted by the military less than three years later. This convinced most Marxist revolutionaries in the region not to put their faith in electoral politics. On the other hand, for the two decades following Castro's rise, those who tried to emulate his methods failed—in Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala. In Latin American guerrilla circles, Cuba had come to be viewed as an aberration. Then came 1979, when all the pieces fell into place for the Sandinistas and the dream was reborn.

In the years since 1979, however, the Salvadoran guerrillas have come to realize that El Salvador is not Nicaragua. There was only one Somoza family, the common evil against whom it was so easy to unite a disparate opposition. In El Salvador, the struggle is against something faceless and diffused, a military institution and power structure in which good and bad, right and wrong are often inseparable. This realization created a new issue to divide the Salvadoran left: continued struggle versus negotiated settlement.

Sons Of The Party

Historically, the issues that have splintered the Salvadoran left have related to the means of reaching power, not what to do once in power. All five guerrilla groups have in the past produced documents or made declarations calling for the creation of governing systems combining the philosophy of Marx and the methods of Lenin, though such positions have been publicly tempered in recent years as the Marxist-Leninist groups have formed alliances with individuals and groups with Western democratic tendencies. In theory, the Salvadoran guerrillas reject Soviet hegemony, but they seem to do it primarily as a practical matter of survival in this hemisphere. Their argument is that they are a national liberation movement and therefore outside the framework of East-West confrontation or of any kind of accord in which the Soviet Union might promise to stay out of the U.S. neighborhood. However, they still embrace the Leninist concept of internationalism, the worldwide solidarity in which one "socialist" government or group helps another.

The Salvadoran Communist Party claims direct descent from Farabundo Martí, who rode with Sandino in Nicaragua, then returned home and organized the 1932 peasant revolt, to which the military reacted by massacring thousands of people and sending Martí to the firing squad. For the next four decades, the party, formally organized two years before the revolt, concentrated on staying alive. It functioned above ground and below ground, shifting as necessary to accommodate the electoral laws laid down by El Salvador's succession of military governments. The Salvadoran Communists followed Moscow's dictate of seeking power through legal means. They formed front groups, infiltrated labor and student organizations, and, though able to command only a few percentage points of the vote, joined electoral coalitions supporting centrist candidates such as José Napoleón Duarte and Guillermo Ungo. During tough periods, the national university provided them a secure refuge because the Salvadoran government usually (but not always) respected the Latin American tradition of university autonomy, which means the physical inviolability of the campus as much as academic freedom.

THIS COMPLAISANCE, this unwritten pact with the establishment, guaranteed a certain anemic well-being. But it rankled some within the party, particularly Salvador Cayetano Carpio. A former bakery worker and union activist, he had joined the party in 1947 and risen to secretary-general by the mid-1960s. In the 1950s he had spent two-and-a-half years in Moscow at a school run by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. By 1969, however, Carpio faced a dispute within the party over his desire to take up arms. He was challenged for the job of secretary-general by Jorge Shafik Handal, a son of wealthy Palestinian immigrants, who was then 39 and showing signs of becoming a permanent law student.

The Soviet party gave its backing to Handal and to a continued political approach, so Carpio left the party in early 1970 and formed the Popular Liberation Forces (F.P.L.). The statutes of the new organization accused the Communist Party of being swept up in opportunism, revisionism, bourgeois reformism, bureaucracy, and other right-wing notions that ignored the needs of the people. Carpio once said that he began the F.P.L. with seven people, including himself, and without any money or even a single pistol.

The People's Revolutionary Army, known by its Spanish acronym E.R.P., was born about a year after the F.P.L. as the result of the coming together of university activists, among them Joaquín Villalobos, with some other people who left the Communist Party. In 1975, an internal struggle between the "military" and "political" factions of the E.R.P. ended in a bloody purge and the creation of another guerrilla group by the surviving losers—the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN). In the process, two members of the losing faction, including its leader, Roque Dalton, were condemned by a guerrilla court-martial and executed. Death threats were made against other dissidents. Once Dalton was dead, the victorious faction claimed that he had been a Cuban agent, a C.I.A. agent, and a revisionist. Five years later, in an interview with the

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Mexican news weekly *Proceso*, the man who became the leader of the FARN, Ernesto Jovel, accused Villalobos of having personally killed Dalton.

Before the interview was published, Jovel himself died in confusing circumstances. His light plane went down in the Pacific on September 17, 1980, as he flew to Panama for a meeting with friends who were arranging arms supplies for the FARN. Doubts about whether it was an accident were raised, however, by the first report from the FARN command saying he had died in a traffic accident in San Salvador, followed by a statement saying the FARN did not blame any other revolutionary organization, then followed by the plane crash report.

The guerrilla groups made relatively little impact on El Salvador until the mid-1970s, when they began a series of kidnappings for ransom that netted an estimated $60 million, most of it going to the F.P.L. and the E.R.P. They also specialized in occupying churches, factories, and government buildings, taking over unions, and manipulating contract bargaining for political gain. Much of this was accomplished through so-called mass organizations, which were created by the guerrilla groups for street activities. Each of them sought affiliation with dozens of smaller groups, such as organizations of teachers, secondary school students, and peasants.

MONEY COLLECTION FOR SALVADORAN REBELS
(J. ROSS BAUGHMAN/VISIONS)

The Salvadoran military, governing through its own political party, played into the guerrillas' hands by its proclivity for repression and its suspicion of any kind of dissent, however peaceful. El Salvador's Marxist-Leninists might have been able to dream their dreams in a vacuum, but they could not have grown and prospered in one. External help aside, they were aided by two key factors inside El Salvador. One was the electoral fraud perpetrated by the military in 1972 and 1977 to prevent victories by the moderate opposition. This served to disillusion people about the prospects for Western democracy and to channel many of them, particularly the young, into the ranks of subversion. The guerrilla groups also benefited from the country's poverty and injustice, which produced uncritical international sympathy for whoever opposed the Salvadoran power structure.

Villalobos, in the foreword of a book written in 1978 by one of his E.R.P. comrades, Ana Guadalupe Martínez, acknowledged the usefulness of these elements to the guerrillas and the need to exploit them. Martínez would not have been able to publish her story of torture and rape in a National Guard prison, Villalobos wrote, if she had not first been willing to take up arms and fight. Such actions revealed to the world the state of human rights in El Salvador, he said. Martínez, the E.R.P. commander in eastern El Salvador, was imprisoned in mid-1976 for the murder of a policeman, but the E.R.P. kidnapped a wealthy industrialist seven months later and secured her freedom as part of the ransom. The industrialist died in guerrilla hands of wounds suffered in the kidnapping.

In April 1979, the Salvadoran Communist Party met secretly and decided to join the armed struggle, reportedly with the agreement of the Soviet Union. Handal has attributed the decision primarily to the Chilean example. However, Allende's downfall had occurred nearly six years earlier. It is more likely that the Salvadoran Communists saw the ranks of the guerrilla groups swelling while the party remained small and static. With the guerrillas and their mass organizations mounting so many antigovernment activities as to make people think an insurrection was imminent, the Communists ran the risk of having no role in the future government if they remained nonviolent. Even so, the Communists delayed in organizing a guerrilla force, because, says Handal, they did not know how to do it.

About the time the Communists were making their decision, a group of Army officers was reaching the same conclusion, that insurrection was imminent. The officers moved against the government of General Carlos Humberto Romero, which they judged intransigent and incompetent. On October 15, 1979, they took power, with a promise to meet some of the demands of the left and to open a dialogue with it. This threw the revolutionary groups into disarray. Led by a junta of two colonels and three civilians, including the social democrat Guillermo Ungo, the new government was joined by Communists and members of other revolutionary groups at the cabinet level. But the major guerrilla groups didn't give an inch. The E.R.P. and the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the F.P.L.'s mass organization, mounted military assaults and takeovers of factories and government buildings in the first days of the new government. When the junta broke apart ten weeks later, it was not clear whether it was the

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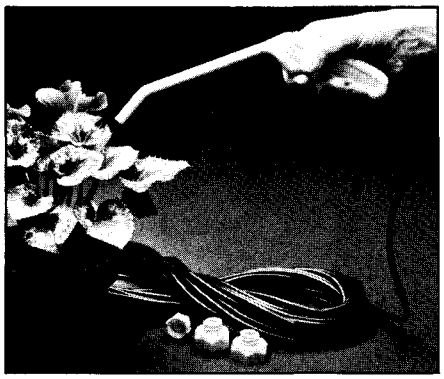

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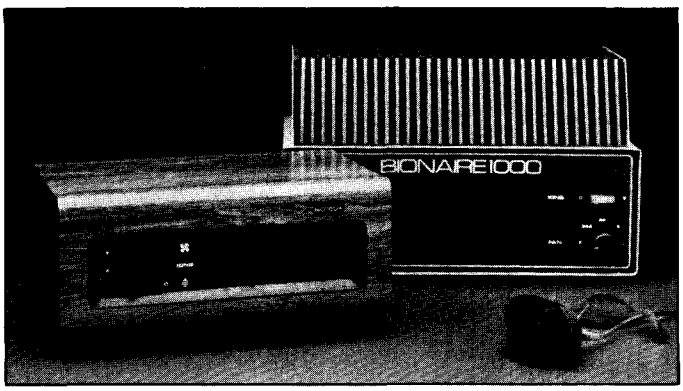

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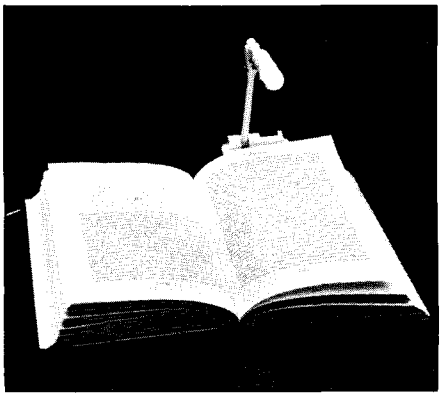

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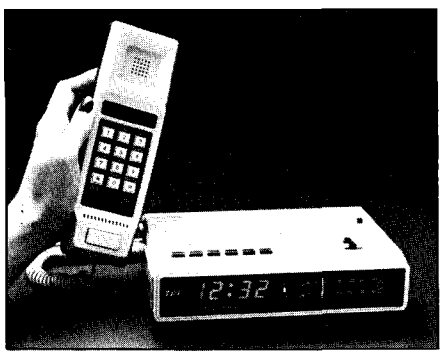

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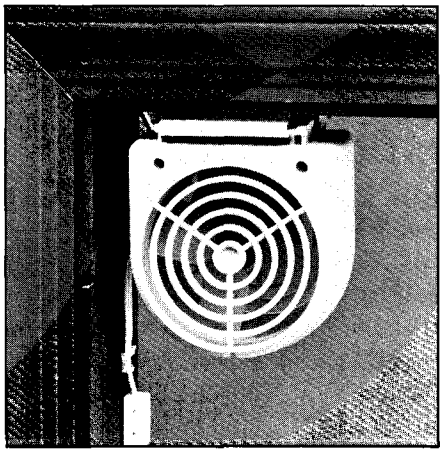
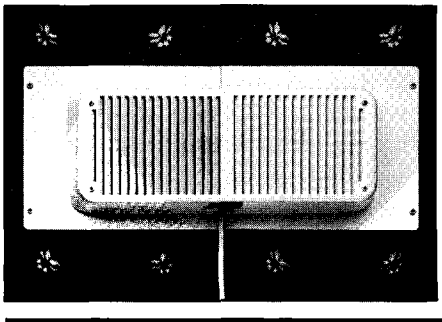


down into the room. The fan has a 110 volt motor with a 10 foot cord and an in-line switch. It measures 5½" x 5" x 3½". **$28.00** ($3.95) #A397. The **register fan** (shown bottom) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The booster fan (actually it is two small 4" fans running together) fits all registers up to 6" x 14" and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9' of cord and costs **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536. We also offer the room-to-room fan and the register fan as a set for **$60.00**($6.95) #A667.



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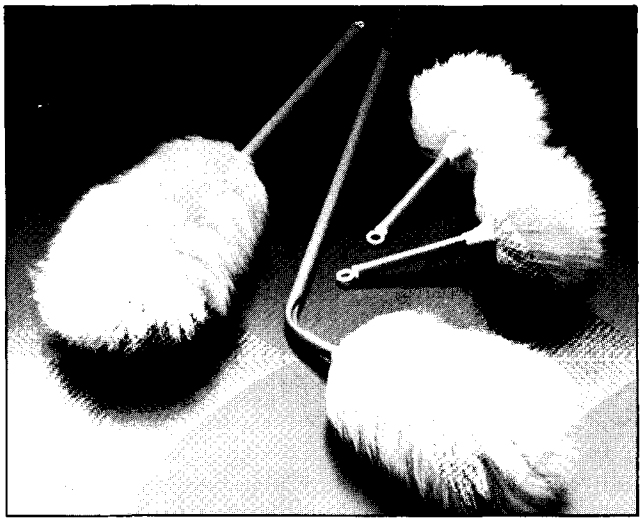

two mini-dusters cost **$8.00** ($1.95) #A794. We can send you the entire group, a total of four dusters, for just **$16.00** ($2.95) #A783.

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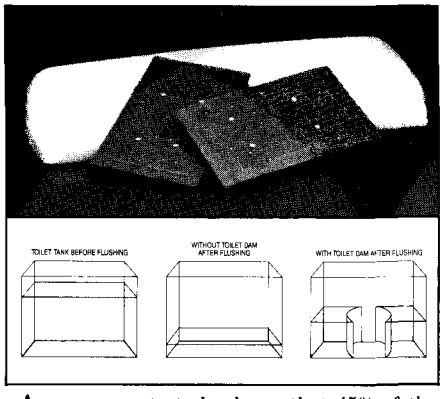

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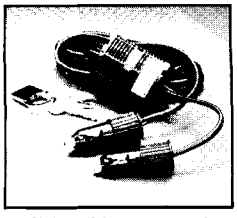

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result of disputes over excessive violence on the part of the military—as some of the civilians said—or of the pressures from outside by the revolutionary groups.

Almost everybody involved in the Salvadoran drama organized or formed new alignments in 1980. The military made a pact with the Christian Democrats, the largest opposition party, and formed a new government. The right, distrustful of the Christian Democrats and the Army high command, coalesced around Roberto D'Aubuisson, a former Army major forced into retirement by the coup leaders. Disaffected center-left politicians who had left the previous government, led by Ungo and Enrique Alvarez Cordova, united with some of the mass organizations controlled by the guerrillas and formed the Democratic Revolutionary Front (F.D.R.), a political group that concentrated on diplomacy in Western nations. The guerrilla groups, now numbering four, met in Havana and formed a unified military directorate. They later took the name Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (F.M.L.N.). In 1980, the FARN temporarily dropped out of the directorate because of its old dispute with the E.R.P., but after the death of FARN leader Jovel in September, it returned to the fold under Jovel's successor, Fermán Cienfuegos. At the end of 1980, a fifth guerrilla group came into the F.M.L.N.—the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers, organized the year before with indirect ties to the Communist Party through one of its founders, Fabio Castillo.

The Left's Mistakes

Despite an awesome organizational structure, the tactics and strategies of the Salvadoran left have been as peppered with mistakes as those of the military and the government. First there were the differences over how to react to the 1979 coup. Then came the inability to capitalize on the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in March 1980. The killing of the archbishop by an unknown gunman sent tremors through the government, which was convinced that it would produce an insurrection. Instead, the left appeared to lose face with the people after the largest of the mass organizations, the F.P.L.'s Popular Revolutionary Bloc, disrupted the funeral.

During the same period in 1980 that the guerrilla groups were forming their alliances and unified directorate, two of the four—the Communist Party and the FARN—were secretly, but unsuccessfully, appealing to one of the military officers on the junta, Colonel Adolfo Majano, to stage a palace coup. (Elements on the right were simultaneously trying to convince other military officers to purge Majano.) The F.P.L., meanwhile, was preparing for a long war from its power base in the mountainous province of Chalatenango on the Honduran border, and the E.R.P. was laying plans to seek victory through insurrection with Villalobos and his lieutenants as the revolutionary vanguard.

After sealing an agreement for Cuban and Sandinista support during meetings in Managua in mid-1980, the F.M.L.N. brought off a general offensive in January 1981. It was impressive, but it did not set off the hoped-for popular insurrection, and the Army was able to beat it back even before the resumption of U.S. military assistance. Since then, military initiatives have seemed oriented more toward political and diplomatic objectives than toward territorial conquest. Neither side has been able to turn the errors and losses of the other into significant victories for itself. The guerrilla forces have reached an estimated five to six thousand combatants. Until recent months the F.P.L. was considered the largest single group, with at least two thousand. Villalobos's E.R.P. is now thought to have become the largest and strongest group, in part because of its easier access to weapons and training through Nicaragua and Cuba.

The Negotiations Option

Until the end of 1980, the E.R.P. and the F.P.L. both opposed any suggestion of talking to the other side, apparently convinced of the inevitability of victory. The first of many public calls for talks began in late 1980, with Ungo saying in Mexico that the left wanted to talk with the owner of the circus, not the acrobats—meaning the U.S., not the Salvadoran government. The joint Diplomatic-Political Commission of the F.M.L.N. and the F.D.R. wrote a "common platform" at the end of 1980 proposing a government based on nonalignment, self-determination, social reforms, democratic representation, a new armed force, continuation of some elements of private enterprise, and freedom of religion. These terms can mean whatever the user wants them to mean, but the platform contained no Marxist-Leninist rhetoric. Nobody ever denied that the guerrilla organizations still had their Leninist programs in mind, backed by reams of documents floating around, some old, some not so old, but the argument was that those were just dreams for some distant future.

Preliminary contact with the U.S. was subsequently made through a Honduran politician, but the effort ran up against two concurrent events: the change of government in Washington and the big offensive in El Salvador. Since then, the question of negotiations has moved through numerous offers and proposals to today's two sets of contacts, one between the rebels and the special U.S. envoy, Richard Stone, the other between the rebels and a commission named by the Salvadoran government.

The moderates in the left, primarily Zamora and Ungo, have been arguing in recent meetings with U.S. congressional delegations that the logic—from a U.S. perspective—of reaching a political settlement to the war, meaning power sharing or a transitional government in which the left would participate prior to elections, is to prevent Marxist-Leninist hard-liners from gaining the upper hand in the government. Conscious of the distaste with which the Sandinista government in Nicaragua is viewed by most U.S. politicians, from conservative Republicans to liberal Democrats, they contend that things have turned out the way they have in Nicaragua because the 1978-79 war against the Somoza dynasty was allowed to continue to the point of a military victory by the insurgents. To

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avoid this in El Salvador, they contend, it is necessary to reach a political settlement now to give the moderates more clout in a new government. There are some holes in this argument—including the ongoing debate in Nicaragua over whether the Sandinistas really defeated the National Guard or just conned the Western world with their democratic façade. It is also based on the debatable assumption that if the war continues the guerrillas are going to eventually win. But it is the argument they use.

U.S. diplomats and the Reagan Administration have frequently claimed that these offers to talk are just tactics to help the guerrillas gain time or some other advantage that would contribute to total victory. At least in part, the experiences of the past three years confirm that point of view. For example, at the beginning of February 1981, right after the offensive in El Salvador, someone in the Nicaraguan government leaked a document of the joint Diplomatic-Political Commission of the F.M.L.N. and the F.D.R. proposing that the left offer to negotiate with the Salvadoran junta if the United States would first terminate military assistance. The objectives of such a maneuver, it implied, were less to reach a settlement than to gain time in the war and improve the standing of the Salvadoran left with European and Latin American governments.

The Salvadoran military and the Christian Democrats used the document as proof of what they considered the endless treachery of the left, but it is also possible that the proposal, since it carried the names of Guillermo Ungo and some other moderates, was part of a maneuver within the left to try to bring the hard-liners into a pro-negotiations stance by whatever means. Six months later, in August 1981, an internal F.P.L. document from Carpio spoke of using dialogue and negotiation as "an auxiliary but strategic factor in our struggle for power." Leftist sources say that during this period Carpio put his name to joint proposals for negotiations only very reluctantly, arguing that a lengthy war was necessary to allow time for the growth of the class consciousness of the masses.

Others in the left compared Carpio to a religious fanatic for his determination to see his method through, no matter how long it took or how much hardship it imposed on the revolutionary movement. But the other leaders were unable to prevail over a man who, at the age of 50, had been willing to start a guerrilla war with seven people and no weapons. He resisted even the pressures of Castro and the Sandinistas until the bitter end. When Anaya Montes was killed, he was in Libya looking for the arms that would allow the F.P.L. to continue the war on his own terms. Between the lines of the oration he delivered at her funeral was a pathetic plea for the Sandinistas not to abandon his cause. But the decision to make Villalobos the commander in chief of the guerrilla forces had been made.

Conciliation?

Until now, Villalobos has been known primarily as a battlefield tactician, having translated a skill for kidnappings and urban violence into a talent for planning the guerrillas' larger military operations. He also developed a relatively sophisticated knowledge of weaponry. He had talked little about other matters until the beginning of September, when he made a lengthy clandestine radio broadcast putting forward the guerrillas' most conciliatory proposal to date for a settlement of the war. Claiming to speak for the entire F.M.L.N., he made four basic points: (1.) a call for a new economic and social order but denying any intent to expropriate all private property; (2.) a government of three branches that would carry out "truly free elections"; (3.) a new national army formed by elements of the existing army and the guerrilla organizations; (4.) a nonaligned foreign policy, but one recognizing the strategic necessity of good relations with the United States.

Given the ideological and tactical history of the Salvadoran guerrilla groups, much of what he said may be dismissed as a smokescreen. However, one point seems worth noting. By offering to form a new army made up of rebels and elements of the existing army, Villalobos is trying to address the primary weakness, from the standpoint of non-Marxists, that existed when the Sandinistas came to power in Nicaragua. The Carter Administration, in the last days of Somoza, made a panicky effort to salvage part of the old National Guard to merge with the Sandinistas to form a new army in which the United States might retain some influence and which could serve to strengthen the hands of civilian moderates in the government. The effort failed for a variety of reasons still in dispute, not least of which was the shortage of time. Villalobos, who three years ago was predicting the "moral collapse" of the Salvadoran Army, is suggesting that we talk about this now, when neither side appears on the verge of collapse or victory.

IN MANY WAYS, Villalobos's Army proposal is a major concession. He recognizes, for good or for bad, the importance of the Army officer corps as a political institution, and seems to accept that it must be part of any settlement. By making the proposal, he is also revealing the left's basic insecurity about its own long-run military capabilities and the uncertainties of continuing supplies and training from Nicaragua and Cuba.

But there is still one major hedge in this—for the Salvadoran left, for the Sandinistas, and for Cuba. It is Villalobos himself. The decision to anoint one man, apparently Castro's own choice, to lead the Salvadoran left both militarily and politically reduces the likelihood of the other major weakness that showed up in Nicaragua after Somoza's downfall—the division of power in the Sandinista Directorate among nine theoretically equal men. Just as Nicaragua's non-Marxists found themselves hampered by a lack of influence in the new military structure, so the Sandinistas found their efforts to consolidate power restricted by their internal divisions and bickering. By putting Villalobos at the top now, the Salvadoran left is in a strong position to deal with whatever comes its way, whether it turns out to be total victory, a piece of the Army, or years more of inconclusive struggle.

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DRUNK DRIVIN

A national survey to help you evaluate your state. Compiled by the property and casualty insurance industry.

The drunk driver kills thousands of Americans a year, and injures more than half a million. This series of anti-drunk driving advertisements is dedicated to reducing this toll. Its purpose: to serve as a rallying point for the thousands of individuals and many organizations actively fighting drunk driving in America today. All data are as of August 1, 1983.

State	Drinking age	1st offense license susp
Alabama	19	90 days
Alaska	21 (1/84)	90 days (10/8
Arizona	19	30 days
Arkansas	21	90 days-1 yr.
California	21	None
Colorado	21; 18, 3.2 beer	1 yr. (.15 BAC
Connecticut	20 (10/83)	6 mos. (10/83)
Delaware	21 (1/84)	3 mos.
District of Columbia	21; 18, beer & wine	6 mos.
Florida	19	6 mos.
Georgia	19	1 yr.
Hawaii	18	90 days
Idaho	19	180 days
Illinois	21	1 yr. max.
Indiana	21	60 days-1 yr.
Iowa	19	120 days
Kansas	21; 18, 3.2 beer	Limited use
Kentucky	21	None
Louisiana	18	60 days
Maine	20	45-90 days
Maryland	21	60 days max.
Massachusetts	20	30 days-1 yr.
Michigan	21	6 mos.-1 yr.
Minnesota	19	30 days
Mississippi	21; 18, 3.2 beer	90 days-1 yr.
Missouri	21	90 days
Montana	19	6 mos.
Nebraska	20	6 mos.
Nevada	21	90 days
New Hampshire	20	90 days
New Jersey	21	6 mos.
New Mexico	21	None
New York	19	6 mos.
North Carolina	21; 19, beer & wine	1 yr.
North Dakota	21	91 days
Ohio	21; 19, beer	60 days
Oklahoma	21	1 yr.
Oregon	21	1 yr.
Pennsylvania	21	1 yr.
Rhode Island	20	3-6 mos.
South Carolina	21; 18, beer & wine	6 mos.
South Dakota	21; 18, 3.2 beer	30 days
Tennessee	19	1 yr.
Texas	19	1 yr. max.
Utah	21	90 days
Vermont	18	1 yr.
Virginia	21; 19, beer	6 mos.
Washington	21	90 days
West Virginia	19	6 mos.
Wisconsin	18	3 mos.
Wyoming	19	90 days

Note: 1. Higher of "presumed intoxicated" or "defined as intoxicated" BAC number
2. REDDI = Report Every Drunk Driver Immediately

America is at war. In every state, t battle is on against drunk drivers.

How does your state measure u Many states have reduced fatalitie by increasing the drinking age. Or adopted proven deterrents such as roadside sobriety checks and suspended licenses.

In most states, organizations su as Mothers Against Drunk Driver

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G IN AMERICA

ce	Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) defining Driving While Intoxicated (DWI)	MADD, SADD and RID chapters	Pending legislation	Existing measures
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Dram shop liability (statute holding retail server of alcohol responsible for its consequences)
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD		
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Mandatory rehabilitation	
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD	Simplified legislation to clarify laws	Toll-free number to report DWI suspects
	0.15[1]	MADD, SADD, RID	Drinking age 21; revocation 0.10 BAC	REDDI[2] line; admin. lic. revocation; dram shop
	0.10	SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10[1]	MADD, SADD		
	0.10[1]	SADD		
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Statewide rehabilitation program
rt issued	0.12[1]	MADD, SADD, RID	Drinking age 21; dram shop liability	
rt issued	0.10	SADD		
	0.10[1]	SADD, RID		Toll-free REDDI hot line
	0.10	SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		
rt issued	0.13[1]	MADD, SADD, RID	Drinking age 21; REDDI program	Toll-free line; CB radio watch; Dram shop liability
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Driving while impaired 0.05-0.10 BAC	REDDI hot line
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		
	0.10	MADD, SADD		Mandatory education and community service
	0.10	SADD		
rt issued	0.13	MADD, SADD		
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Drinking age 21	Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD		Dram shop liability
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		
	0.13[1]	MADD, SADD, RID		REDDI program; administrative license revocation
	0.10	SADD		Montanans Against Drunk Drivers organization
	0.10	MADD, SADD	Age 21; open container; license revocation	REDDI program; trooper incentive program
	0.10	MADD, SADD		New law: 2 days in jail or 48 hours of public service
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		$1,000 license surcharge for convicted drivers
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD		
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Blood test for drivers in serious accidents	"STOP DWI" education program; dram shop
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Limited dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD		Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Education program for first offenders	REDDI program; dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	BAC to .05; breath tests for serious accidents	
	0.08 (10/83)	MADD, SADD		Dram shop; REDDI program; CB reporting system
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD		Toll-free hot line; Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID	Drinking age 20 (beer & wine); open container law	
	0.10	SADD		
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Mandatory education requirement
rt issued	0.10[1]	MADD, SADD, RID		Hot line program
rt issued	0.08	SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Drinking age 19 vetoed by governor; dram shop
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD		
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD		Toll-free hot line; CB radio reporting system
rt issued	0.10	MADD, SADD		Administrative license suspension
	0.10	MADD, SADD, RID		Dram shop liability
	0.10	SADD	Drinking age 21; BAC .08; no plea bargaining at .10	Toll-free REDDI hot line; Dram shop liability

DD), Students Against Driving nk (SADD) and Remove Intoxi- d Drivers (RID) are working ctively with legislators to fight ık driving.

Most important are changes in the tudes that once condoned drunk ing. The results of these changes ıe form of new legislation, stricter rcement and reduced death tolls already a hopeful sign.

What can you do in your state?

Begin by reading our report, *Drunk Driving: A Killer We Can Stop.* It explains what every one of us can do to help. We'd like to send you a copy free of charge, as well as additional material to help you do something about drunk driving.

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Please send me at no charge
☐ A copy of *Drunk Driving: A Killer We Can Stop.*
☐ A list of organizations active in my state.
☐ Your bibliography on drunk driving.

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The policy riddle: intervention, withdrawal, or political settlement?

THEIR WARS, OUR CHOICES

BY ROBERT W. TUCKER

WE ARE IN the initial stages of what promises to become another major foreign policy debate. The Administration's efforts to dampen the growing controversy over its Central American policy have had little effect. In order to succeed, these efforts require the kind of foreign policy consensus that we have not had since the late 1960s. In its absence, appeals to a spirit of bipartisanship will be made in vain.

What has already given the debate over Central America a sharper edge than anything we have experienced in the past decade is the expectation that we will eventually find ourselves engaged in armed conflict. Since the end of the war in Vietnam, the prospect of military intervention has seldom arisen as a serious policy issue. Almost as a matter of convention, the post-Vietnam world has been divided into areas where armed force is virtually ruled out because it is considered too dangerous and areas where it is ruled out because it is seen as disproportionate to interest. Central America does not readily conform to this convention.

The echoes of the past that we hear today are unmistakable. The debate over Central America forms more than a mere parallel with the debate over Vietnam. It is a continuation of this debate. The case made today by the Reagan Administration for its Central American policy resembles nothing so much as the case made yesterday by the Johnson Administration for intervening in Vietnam. Why were we in Vietnam? We were there, Johnson insisted, to preserve the freedom and the right of self-determination of the South Vietnamese. In turn, America's security depended upon the realization of this objective. "To leave Vietnam to its fate," Lyndon Johnson declared at the outset of the war, "would shake the confidence . . . in the value of the American commitment, the value of America's word. The result would be increased unrest and instability, and even wider war."

The same themes mark the Reagan Administration's defense of its policy in Central America. The American objective in Central America, Mr. Reagan asserted in his April address to Congress, is to preserve the freedom and right of self-determination of the peoples of the region. This objective is as vital to our security as it is to those we are assisting. If we cannot defend ourselves in Central America, the President concluded, "we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble, and the safety of our homeland would be put to jeopardy."

The continuity apparent in the defense is equally apparent in the critique. Why were we in Vietnam? Critics argued that it was because of a foreign policy obsessively committed to opposing revolutionary change in the name of anticommunism. Although the world had become increasingly pluralistic between the 1940s and the 1960s, American policy denied this pluralism. The result was a policy that could not distinguish between our vital and peripheral interests, that led to the overcommitment of the nation's resources, that forced revolutionary movements into the arms of our adversaries, and that in its invariable support of reactionary forces betrayed American values.

The Reagan Administration's Central America policy, the charge runs, opposes revolutionary violence in Central America out of an obsessive anticommunism, now equated even more insistently with anti-Sovietism than in the period of Vietnam. Although revolutionary movements in Central America are first and foremost the product of indigenous causes led by nationalist forces, the Administration sees in them only the instrument of Soviet-Cuban aggrandizement. The result, again, is a policy incapable of distinguishing between vital and peripheral interests. If persisted in, it will leave us little choice but to intervene or to deal with a Central America that is the unwelcome product of our fears. For unless we intervene, our present policy will leave Central American revolutionary movements no alternative but to seek ever closer ties with the Soviet Union and its Cuban surrogate. Rather than resist revolution, we should adjust to it. Instead of repeating earlier mistakes with Cuba, we should learn from them.

The themes common to both the Vietnam and Central American debates go back to the immediate postwar

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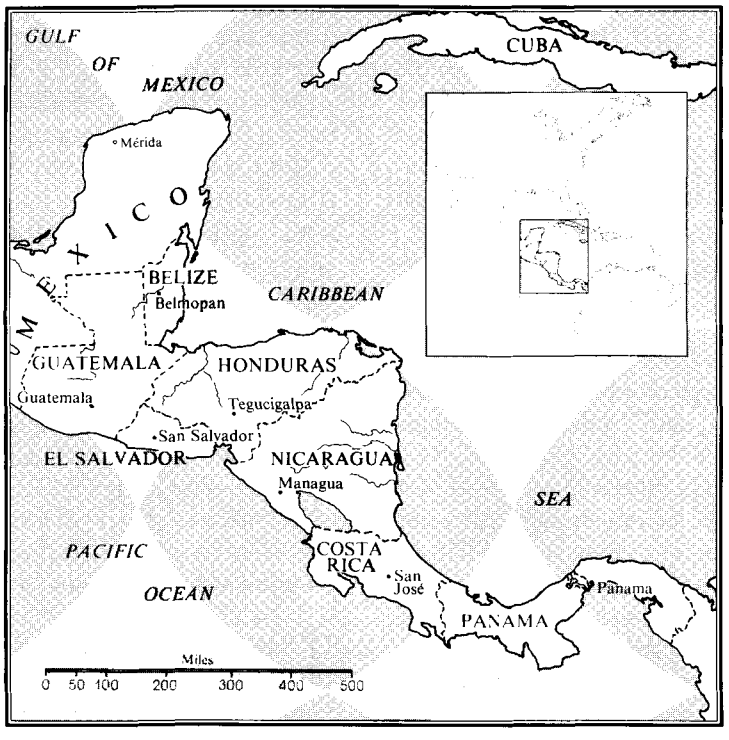
years, to the origins of containment and to the historic expression given this policy. The Truman Doctrine, invoked in President Reagan's April 1983 address, responded to another guerrilla war, in Greece. In requesting Congress to grant economic and military assistance to Greece (and Turkey), President Truman declared that a willingness "to help free people to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes . . . is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundation of international peace and hence the security of the United States."

The Truman Doctrine provided the broader rationale for the policy of containment, initially in Europe and subsequently in Asia. The various applications of containment, however, were not uniformly received. In Asia, containment was criticized almost from the outset. At best, it was argued, containment would result in the creation of highly dependent relationships, an outcome that we were quite unsuited for as a nation. At worst, we would be driven into an increasingly futile counterrevolutionary stance which would lead to the over-extension of American power.



MAP BY KENNY GRADY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This criticism reflected a persisting disagreement over the nature of American interests in Asia and in the world at large. At issue was a broad difference of opinion over both the meaning of our security and the other interests whose vindication might justify the use of American military power. In Asia, the persisting disagreement was kept within limits until Vietnam. Although containment in Asia evoked little enthusiasm, it also evoked only modest opposition so long as it did not entail a serious price. For a decade and more, a negative consensus prevailed. Vietnam put this consensus to the test and laid bare its fragility.

The debate over Central America raises once again the great issues of postwar American foreign policy. But it does so on a much smaller stage and on one that we have long laid claim to by virtue of its geographic proximity. The difference is as simple as it is profound. That we are now debating over Central America in much the same terms that we debated over Vietnam is as indicative as anything can be of the change that has since occurred in the nation's outlook. Yesterday an Administration could claim in the words of former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, that, "We can be safe only to the extent that our total environment is safe." By intervening in a country as far removed and as inaccessible as Vietnam, we appeared quite ready to fulfill that hyperbolic claim. And it was in response to a preoccupation with security that appeared almost inversely proportional to the real security interests that so many critics reacted to at the time.

Today, the Administration makes no claim about a totally safe environment; the very articulation of such a claim, given the intervening changes in the world, would seem ludicrous. The proximity of Central America scarcely permits the once familiar charge of globalism. The Reagan Administration may intend to remain the policeman of the Caribbean and Central America. Still, this is something quite different from the pretension of being the policeman of the world. If it is nevertheless argued that we can no longer successfully lay claim to policing a traditional sphere of influence, and ought not attempt to do so, this itself suggests the political distance we have traveled since the late 1960s.

The continuity of the debates over Central America and Vietnam should not obscure the very considerable difference. The crux of that difference is geographical and not, as Jeane Kirkpatrick would have it, "that the Congress that cut off aid to Vietnam could say it did not guess what would follow." At the time, Congress could have guessed, and indeed, a number of its members did guess, what might well follow. The withdrawal of support to South Vietnam was the act of a Congress determined to end an involvement whatever the consequences for those being abandoned. That determination showed how radically different was the assessment of interest between our initial intervention and our withdrawal. The question that goes to the heart of the current debate is whether a comparable reassessment of interest should be made in Central America.

The Question Of Interest

If this question remains obscured, it is largely the result of the character of congressional opposition to Central American policy. To date, Congress has provided

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the principal forum for debate over Administration policy. Yet congressional critics of Central American policy have not seriously challenged the Administration's assessment of interest. Some of them have accused the Administration of excess in its estimate of the consequences attending defeat in El Salvador. Most, however, appear as reluctant to confront the prospect of defeat as are Administration supporters. From the outset of the debate, the bulk of the Democratic opposition has also opposed the establishment of Marxist-Leninist governments in Central America and has been even more insistent in declaring its opposition to a Soviet military presence there.

CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS appear as critics of means and not of ends, or of interests. There is, they argue, an alternative course to the Administration's—the course of a negotiated settlement. This position is reminiscent of the earlier congressional opposition to the intervention in Vietnam. Then, too, it was argued that interests could be secured if only the Administration would work for a negotiated political settlement. In retrospect, we can see that the opposition to the Johnson Administration's course in Vietnam had already begun to reassess interest and that this reassessment initially took the form of a disagreement over means. Unless we assume that congressional opponents of Central American policy are motivated simply by partisan considerations, a similar process may be occurring now, with a debate over means obscuring what is in fact a growing debate over interest.

The case for a reassessment of interest has instead been made by a growing number of Administration critics outside Congress. Its common point of departure is that we have no valid and certainly no vital interest in opposing the emergence of radical governments in Central America. Our interest dictates abstention from the internal struggle, at least so long as it remains essentially an internal struggle. Of course, some outside support for guerrilla forces is considered inevitable. But a modest amount of support cannot prove significant, let alone decisive, unless attended by a domestic situation—an ineffective, incompetent, or corrupt government—that makes it so. If this is why external support to radical revolutionary movements proves decisive, it is also the great reason why our interest is to abstain from attempting to determine the outcome of such conflicts.

In this assessment, our interest extends no further than to oppose significant outside support to guerrilla forces. Experience has shown that this caveat in principle may prove insubstantial in practice because of the manner in which the qualification is interpreted and applied. In the Central American context—again, reminiscent of Vietnam—we have already had interminable arguments over the kind and magnitude of outside support afforded the guerrilla forces in El Salvador. In the absence of overt intervention on behalf of the guerrillas, these arguments will doubtless continue.

In the main, calls for a reassessment of interest have concentrated less on how radical revolutionary movements come to power and more on how these movements may be expected to act once they have achieved power. That they may be expected to resist submitting to our traditional sway in the region is taken for granted. The new look is not disturbed by the prospect of a rising challenge to an historic sphere of influence. It finds such notions in any event archaic and discredited. "Forget the Monroe Doctrine," a *New York Times* editorial counsels its readers. "It was a young America's prayer for isolation from Europe's conflicts and later a pretext for aggrandizement. It is resented by Latins and . . . irrelevant to the nuclear age." To invoke the Monroe Doctrine today in Central America is to pursue a reverse Brezhnev Doctrine, and with no greater justification. George Ball warns against continuing "our arrogant interference to preserve frozen patterns of a corrupt past." And Robert White, a former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador asks: "Where is it written that the people of Central America must remain in bondage so that the United States can remain free?"

Are these rhetorical effusions to be taken literally? Do critics of Administration policy now want to abandon the whole of the Monroe Doctrine? Its original purpose, after all, was to set limits on the role foreign powers could aspire to in this hemisphere. Do the subsequent uses to which it has been put invalidate the original purpose and the security interests that were thereby expressed? The same *Times* editorial that urges us to forget the Monroe Doctrine also acknowledges that "keeping Soviet bases out of the Americas is a matter for the superpowers to resolve." Why a matter for the superpowers and not for each American state to determine as it sees fit? Is it because the Monroe Doctrine is not to be entirely forgotten, though its claims are now to be narrowly limited?

THERE IS NO clear answer to these questions. Still, it is difficult to avoid the impression that this one remaining assertion of a security interest is not to be taken very seriously. If the presence of Soviet bases is now to form the litmus test of a real threat to our security, the problem arises of determining the circumstances for meeting the test. Will we know a Soviet base when we see one? Does a Cuban base constitute the functional equivalent of a Soviet base? Probably not, in the judgment of most critics. But even if we restrict the test to a direct Soviet presence, the evidence of that presence may well give rise to endless controversy. The Soviets cannot be counted on for help in resolving such controversy. In the event they were to move toward establishing an intimate relationship with a Central American state, they could be expected to do so in a manner that permitted some room for doubt about the precise character of the relationship. Their interest presumably would be to avoid openly taunting us or in presenting us with an indisputable Rubicon. In the absence of being found *in flagrante delicto*, doubt will persist. It will persist if only for the reason that a clear resolution of doubt might well form the precondition of a superpower crisis. If Soviet bases are a matter for the superpowers to resolve, and to resolve only after the bases are largely an accom-

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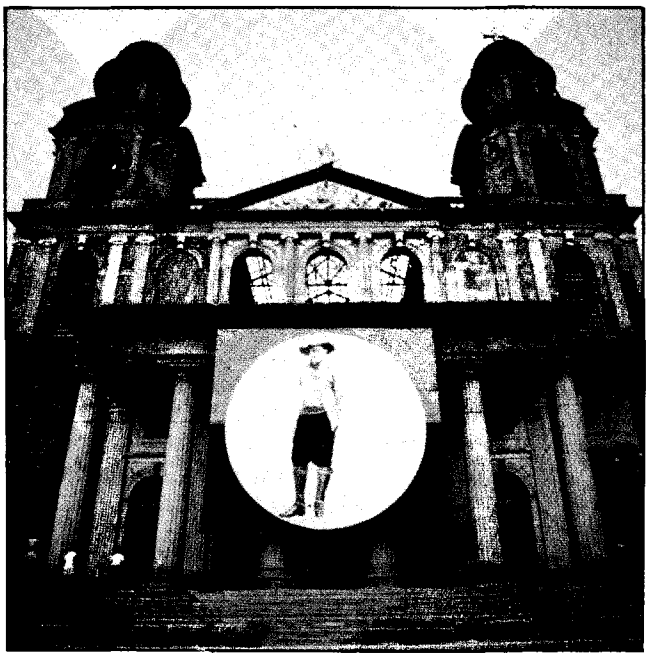
plished fact, we have a scenario that bears a marked resemblance to the Cuban missile crisis.

Thus the disposition of many to avoid looking too closely at the military relationships the Soviet Union establishes in Central America, a disposition already apparent in the case of Nicaragua, will be reinforced by an awareness of the possible consequences to which discovery may lead. It is but a short step to ask why we should see in the presence of Soviet military bases in Central America a threat to our security.

Only a few critics of Administration policy have had the candor to raise these questions directly. They are the true security skeptics. From a certain perspective, their argument is unexceptionable. The core security of the United States cannot be jeopardized by developments in Central America, whatever their outcome. A hostile Central America, even one that is host to Soviet military bases, cannot substantially add to the threat already posed to our physical security. Soviet bases in Central America cannot alter the strategic balance, even if Moscow were bold enough to attempt to place missiles there and Washington were passive enough to tolerate them. Nor can Soviet bases alter the conventional military balance in the region. That balance will not only remain preponderantly in our favor, but the effects of a Soviet conventional military presence can be effectively countered at marginal cost.



CATHEDRAL IN MANAGUA BEARING THE IMAGE OF SANDINO
(D. LEESON/NEW ORLEANS TIMES-PICAYUNE)

What follows from these considerations? One conclusion is this: If physical security formed the only standard by which our interests in Central America were to be judged, we might well view events there with indifference. This is substantially the conclusion Richard Ullman draws: "The overwhelming military advantage the United States would enjoy (in the event of war) in its own backyard is what makes it so untenable to argue that a Soviet or Cuban presence in Central America would seriously threaten the United States national security." Ullman believes that when judged in terms of our core security, we should view developments in Central America, including the prospect of Soviet or Cuban bases, with relative indifference. He is surely right. By the same standard of judgment, however, we might also view with indifference events in other areas of the world as well, including areas that all but even a handful of security skeptics continue to find our vital interests engaged. Why not, indeed, apply these same considerations to Western Europe? A hostile Western Europe, even one that is host to Soviet missiles, cannot threaten our physical security more than it is already threatened. On the contrary, if nuclear war is the one contingency that may threaten America's security, and if our overriding concern is to reduce this threat to its smallest proportions, the proper course is to abandon our present commitment to Western Europe.

It is not our security in its narrower dimensions that developments in Central America affect, but our security in its broader dimensions. The significance of Soviet bases in Central America is not primarily military but political. Ullman believes, as do others who share his outlook, that the military advantage we enjoy in the region "makes it most unlikely that the Russians or the Cubans would ever place significant military assets there and run the risk of losing them in the first hours of a shooting war." But it is altogether unlikely that the Soviets would calculate the utility of a military presence in Central America primarily on this basis. Instead, they would do so on the basis of the general political significance a military presence might have.

Once interest is equated with the broader dimension of security, however, it cannot be limited only to the matter of bases. If bases are significant above all because of the political consequences for our interests generally, the same must be said of defeat in El Salvador. How important the effects of defeat might prove to be remains uncertain. In part, the answer would depend on the significance we read into defeat as well as on the way we reacted elsewhere. But only in part. It will not do to argue that if the interests jeopardized by defeat in El Salvador were to prove significant, this would be the result of our doing. According to this view, it lies almost entirely within our power, and choice, to limit the consequences of defeat in Central America. For these consequences, the argument goes, are largely a matter of perception and can be shaped by our attitude and behavior. The lessons of Vietnam are invoked to support this argument.

There is a limit, though, to the role of perceptions and to the extent perceptions can be manipulated. Although it is surely within our power to magnify the consequences of defeat in El Salvador, it is not within our power to determine that defeat will carry no adverse consequences. Nor do the lessons of Vietnam support a different conclusion. Had we never intervened in Vietnam, the consequences for American interests of a Communist victory there might have been much less significant than what they in fact turned out to be. But Southeast Asia was not proximate to

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the United States, and the American writ had never run there. The same cannot be said of Central America. Defeat in El Salvador would carry adverse consequences. It would do so whether or not we had become as committed to the outcome as we have. It must clearly do so, given our present commitment.

To acknowledge these altogether commonplace considerations is not to accept uncritically the Administration's estimate of the interests at stake in Central America. It is only to admit that we have never left the old and familiar world dominated by the great competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, a world in which spheres of influence remain of paramount importance. Yet it is just this admission that many opponents of Central American policy find so difficult to make. The debate over Central America cannot be properly understood without taking into account the new vision of global politics and of American foreign policy that took root in the 1970s, in large part as a consequence of Vietnam. The persistence of this vision accounts for a view of interest that appears in such marked contrast with a more conventional view.

If the Administration has plainly exaggerated the interests at stake in Central America, it has done so partly in reaction to an opposition that has resisted virtually its every step. Although the sky will not fall if we do not "prevail" in Central America, our defeat there may well entail serious consequences for our broader security interests elsewhere. It is not the safety of shipping lanes, or the prospects of a flood of refugees to this country, or the danger held out to the stability of Mexico that is ultimately at stake in Central America; it is the credibility of United States power. That credibility, it is quite true, will continue to depend primarily on what we do or fail to do in areas—Western Europe, the Persian Gulf—the intrinsic significance of which is not seriously disputed. If we remain passive before challenge in these areas, what we do or fail to do in Central America can have only marginal significance. Even so, why should we remain passive in Central America, if the result of our passivity there is to increase the prospect of challenge in regions of undoubted importance and where a response may not only prove far more difficult but considerably more dangerous?

The Logic Of Marxist Regimes

These are the principal considerations that now prompt me to have second thoughts about a view I once endorsed. That view was not based on the rejection of spheres of influence. It proceeded from the premise that the nature of the influence we should seek to exercise within our sphere stops short of attempting to determine the internal order of states. On this view, we could tolerate the emergence of radical regimes in Central America, provided that a policy of abstention on our part was matched by similar abstention on the part of others. Moreover, I argued that we could submit to a modest form of blackmail by radical regimes if our submission had the effect of preventing these regimes from entering into a relationship with the Soviet Union or its proxy, Cuba, that resembles the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Events have dealt rather harshly with this view. Although it is true that we have never stood aside from El Salvador's internal strife, it is also true that from the outset others also have sought to influence the outcome of the civil conflict there. Nor is there any reason to believe that abstention on our part in El Salvador would have been met by abstention either on the part of Nicaragua or on the part of those—Cuba and the Soviet Union—supplying arms to Nicaragua. Toward Sandinista Nicaragua, the Carter Administration went to some lengths to show its goodwill and desire for normal relationships. The government in Managua responded in a manner that was bound to put it on a collision course with Washington, and did do so well before the present Administration came to office. That course was not set either by internal measures the Sandinista leadership took, though these measures soon signaled a partial betrayal at least of earlier promises made to the Nicaraguan people, or by the immediate Sandinista alignment with Soviet causes in the world, but by the arms and other assistance that were afforded the Salvadoran guerrillas.

The argument has been made by not a few observers that Managua's behavior has responded from the outset to our pressures. If anything, however, the initial behavior of the Sandinistas was encouraged by the absence of any serious pressure from Washington. Of course, we might have been more generous in the economic aid given to Nicaragua, just as we might have shown more patience and equanimity toward the disquieting pattern of Sandinista behavior. But the contention that had we shown more generosity and patience, the Sandinista leadership in turn would have behaved quite differently toward the conflict in El Salvador is singularly unpersuasive. By its own testimony, this leadership was entirely committed from the outset to the policy of aiding Salvadoran guerrillas in every way possible. That policy alone necessitated an intimate relationship with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

THUS THE Nicaraguan experience must give serious pause to those of us who once argued that the United States should stand aside from the internal strife of Central American states and that if, as a result, radical movements were to come to power, this country should then give them reason not to follow in the footsteps of Cuba. In part, this position reflected the conviction that Cuba might have been prevented from becoming a satellite of the Soviet Union had we shown more patience, understanding, and generosity toward Havana a generation ago. But the Nicaraguan experience does not support this conviction. Instead, it appears to support the view that given its commitments at home and abroad, Castro's Cuba had little choice but to align itself with the Soviet Union. The same appears increasingly the case today with respect to the government in Managua. Political arguments are not, after all, theological disputations. There comes a time when the evidence must be given its due. The weight of this evi-

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dence is not overwhelming. Even so, it points to the conclusion that radical revolutionary regimes arising within our traditional sphere of influence will seek alignment with the Soviet Union. What Cuba has done and Nicaragua is now doing, El Salvador may be expected to do if the guerrillas are once victorious.

THIS OUTCOME is not foreordained. Very little is foreordained in politics. But if we are to prevent it, while nevertheless standing aside from internal strife, we must do a great deal more than we were disposed to do in the case of Nicaragua. It will not be enough, as Seweryn Bialer believes, for us to follow a "shrewder, more deft" policy in order to prevent Central American states from moving into the Soviet orbit. To believe that a more sophisticated diplomacy may turn radical regimes from goals that challenge United States interests is to refuse to take these regimes and their commitments seriously. If we are to take them with the seriousness they deserve, we will have to offer considerable inducements to ensure against their alignment with the Soviet Union. We will have to do so, moreover, while enduring more than a little humiliation. For these regimes cannot be expected to have a special regard for our sensitivities. In international forums, they will inveigh against United States imperialism and support causes championed by the Soviet Union and its allies. We will have to respond with restraint, while continuing our economic inducements.

Nor is this all. A policy of forbearance cannot, if it is to succeed, draw a clear line at those acts that set us on a collison course with Nicaragua. It cannot demand that radical regimes disavow all interest in the cause of revolution. It may attempt to place some limits on the way this interest is manifested, but experience indicates that even this may prove to be very difficult. This being so, we would have to look with a blind eye on some activities that promoted revolution elsewhere in the region.

Finally, it must be kept in mind that the policy in question would not be initiated *in vacuo*, but in circumstances characterized by deep suspicion and hostility. Although we might be determined to persist in a policy of forbearance, others could not be sure of this. For at least some time, prudence would dictate that they continue to look on the Soviet Union as their principal arms supplier. This, too, we would have to accept in the hope that, given time and patience, the relationship would one day be terminated.

The exercise need not be further drawn out. At some point a diplomacy of inducement and concession intent on preventing further Cubas would very likely work. Having once removed virtually every incentive to follow Cuba's example, only ideological fanaticism would insist on subordinating all other interests to its unyielding demands. But this exercise only establishes what we already knew—that if radical regimes in Central America can realize all of their demands, they will not move into Moscow's orbit. To satisfy the requirements of this policy, we would have to submit to a never-ending series of demands and to endure one humiliation after the next. An historic pattern of relationships would not only be altered but even reversed. This fate may one day overtake us. To expect that we will inaugurate it is to expect the impossible.

THE NARROWING ALTERNATIVES

The Administration's predicament arises from the disparity between the interests it insists are at stake in Central America, and the means it has employed on behalf of those interests. Since his April address to Congress, Mr. Reagan has committed the nation to the prevention of a guerrilla victory in El Salvador, and he has done so in a manner that cannot easily be retracted. At the same time, there has been no other commitment. No doubt the Reagan Administration would welcome the overthrow of the present government in Nicaragua. But it is not committed to this objective. The support of the Nicaraguan *contras* can be abandoned in a way that the support of the Salvadoran government and Army cannot. In part, of course, that is the rationale for the "secret" war.

What we are committed to in Central America, then, as distinct from what we would welcome and therefore give varying degree of support to attain, should not be exaggerated. The Administration's predicament is acute enough without exaggerating it. That predicament has grown side by side with the course of the conflict in El Salvador. Although the Administration has heightened its verbal commitment to El Salvador, there has not been a proportionate increase in its material commitment. Nor did the Administration really press Congress for such increase until last spring. As long as the war did not shift markedly against the Salvadoran government, Washington was content to pursue a middle course.

The middle course—neither abandonment nor intervention—assumed that the situation in El Salvador could be stabilized, and progressively improved, without any marked escalation on our part. Events have placed this assumption increasingly in question. The middle course may instead lead to the worst of outcomes. Having committed itself fully in El Salvador, the Administration now risks paying a greater price in defeat than it would have only a year ago. Even in quite favorable circumstances, assuming a continuation of the middle course, the Administration must look forward to a prolonged period during which its efforts are addressed to the formidable tasks of improving the Salvadoran Army and government.

But one cannot count on favorable circumstances. A prudent policy must consider that the war may drag on with no real improvement or that it may even worsen. This is the assumption of the widely discussed interagency "working paper" submitted in July to the National Security Council. The report does not recommend breaking from the middle course, but suggests the broad changes needed if the middle course is to succeed. One such change is "a new and reliable contract, one that outlines for the Salvadorans what they must do to win and what we will do to help." Another is a more cooperative

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and genuinely bipartisan approach by Congress, an approach considered more likely once Congress sees a markedly improved military and political performance in El Salvador. These changes, if they could be secured, unquestionably would give a solid prospect of success to the Administration's middle course. The problem with the middle course has been precisely the great difficulty in securing them. They are no nearer achievement today than they were a year ago.

IF THE MIDDLE COURSE could only be made to work it would represent the best of policy worlds. The Administration's problems arise from the fact that it has not worked and that failure may leave only two alternatives: either to concede defeat in El Salvador or to intervene with combat forces. The White House's recent decision to make a prolonged show of military force in Central America must be seen as an attempt to give a new lease on life to a faltering course and thereby to avoid having to choose between painful alternatives. The military exercises in Honduras and in the waters adjacent to the Central American states are meant to serve as a kind of surrogate intervention. As an exercise in gunboat diplomacy, however, they leave something to be desired. The effectiveness of gunboat diplomacy depended on the conviction of those whose behavior this diplomacy was intended to influence that guns would be fired. In the present case, a diplomacy of intimidation has been attended by assurances at home and abroad that there is no intention to fire the guns. When to these assurances is added the consideration that the guns have not been fired for a considerable period, in Central America or elsewhere, the effectiveness of this latest exercise in gunboat diplomacy can only evoke skepticism. Should it fail in its purposes, the alternatives left to the Administration may be few and stark.

Might the middle course work if accompanied by an arrangement with the Soviet Union whereby Moscow pledged abstention in Central America in return for a comparable pledge from Washington in Afghanistan? Certainly the obstacles are considerable. Moscow and Washington are not the only arms suppliers. Other parties might resist honoring the superpower agreement. But more important is the issue of symmetry. Is there the basis for an agreement involving roughly equal risks and benefits?

Of what would the arrangement consist? It is not enough to respond that both sides would be expected to stop all arms assistance, we to the Afghan rebels and the Soviets to the Salvadoran guerrillas. Moscow would also have to stop the shipment of arms to Nicaragua. In return, would we have to abandon our support for the Nicaraguan rebels? A negative answer assumes that the Soviets would be expected to abandon the present Nicaraguan government. A positive answer, however, might well fail to ease our problem in El Salvador, since without having to deal with the *contras* the Sandinistas probably already have enough arms to continue aiding the Salvadoran guerrillas while keeping a sufficient reserve for themselves.

One difficulty in reaching an agreement, then, is that while the Salvadoran guerrillas might not suffer from the mutual closing off of arms, the Afghan rebels would almost certainly do so. In that event, we would gain little in Central America, while our interests elsewhere would almost certainly be adversely affected. Those states peculiarly dependent on American military assistance might well conclude that the Afghan rebels' fate could one day be theirs. To incur this liability without a virtually certain reward would be folly. Even if we could be sure that Moscow would live up to its end of the bargain, it would still be a bad bargain. It would become more attractive only if the Soviets were to abandon Managua *and*, at the same time, not to contest our assertion of a right to take such disciplinary measures against Cuba as to ensure its abstention in Central America. But this, in turn, would represent a heavy price for Moscow to pay, and one that in all likelihood would be rejected.

Thus it is not easy to see the kind of mutually satisfactory arrangement the superpowers might make. In the absence of such arrangements, could we deal effectively with the "source" by unilateral measures? Possibly. But these measures either would involve some risk of armed conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union or would require, if confined to the economic realm, some immediate sacrifice of domestic economic interest. The Administration has shown no disposition to entertain either prospect.

THESE ARE the general considerations that have led both critics and supporters of Administration policy to insist that, whatever its disclaimers, Washington cannot rule out the possibility of armed intervention in El Salvador. One candid supporter, Norman Podhoretz, has recently written that if the Administration is to be taken at its word about the interests at stake in Central America, it must be thinking, and quite seriously, about intervention. The Administration's continued insistence that it will not countenance a compromise of objectives in El Salvador can only encourage the conclusion either that it is deceiving itself or that it is deliberately deceiving others. Even if only deceiving itself, the day when self-deception is still possible may now be drawing to a close.

Critics of Administration policy have generally depicted the consequences of military intervention in the most lurid of colors. Their estimate of these consequences is a kind of mirror image of the Administration's estimate of the consequences of defeat. And just as the Administration has exaggerated the consequences of defeat, so too have critics exaggerated the consequences of intervention, particularly by evoking the specter of another domestic Vietnam.

The Administration appears to share the belief that military intervention in Central America would give rise to the kind of disaffection and debate we experienced during the Vietnam War. Yet this belief is difficult to credit. The intervention in Vietnam coincided with other crises—racial and generational—in American society. The war became a part of these other crises and more than just a debate over foreign policy. Central America

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does not coincide with any other such crises.

Then too, the debate over Vietnam was one in which the principal participants were former allies who had long been committed to the same causes. A sense of betrayal did much to exacerbate the earlier debate. The most articulate and effective critics of the war were those who had provided the main support for American foreign policy since World War II, the liberal intellectuals and the moderate Republicans. The debate over Central America can scarcely evoke a similar sense of betrayal. In Congress the debate has largely followed party lines and has been motivated in no small measure by considerations of political advantage. Opportunism is a much less serious matter in politics than is betrayal. More generally, the participants in today's controversy are, with few exceptions, adversaries of many years standing. Central America is only the most recent of their many differences in foreign policy.

But the major reason for believing that military intervention in Central America would not have consequences at home comparable to those of Vietnam is simply the marked differences in the physical circumstances of the two regions. Intervention in Central America could not begin to rival in magnitude and difficulty the intervention in Vietnam. This would be so even if the intervention eventually extended beyond El Salvador and the forces eventually arrayed against us included those of Cuba. Only the virtually inconceivable appearance of Soviet forces could alter the power equations that operate so overwhelmingly to our advantage in Central America.

GUERRILLA GUARDING A BURNING GOVERNMENT TRUCK IN EL SALVADOR (CINDY KARP/BLACK STAR)

Military intervention in Central America appears as an altogether modest enterprise. If confined to El Salvador, and if unopposed by Nicaragua and Cuba, the active phase of the intervention would be very brief. Guerrilla forces might offer token resistance and attempt to inflict a few casualties on American forces. They would not, and could not, make a serious attempt to contest American forces. Instead, the guerrillas could be expected simply to fade away. Their strategy would be to conserve their forces and to wait for the day, following our departure, when they could renew the contest on more favorable terms.

The consequences of military intervention would therefore follow a brief active military phase. In considering these consequences, the Vietnam experience would seem almost irrelevant. Almost equally irrelevant, though, are our former interventions in the region. A number of observers have drawn an optimistic scenario of intervention in El Salvador by recalling our 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic. In 1965, our intervention enjoyed the sanction—if only *a posteriori* and indirect—of the Organization of American States. In this earlier case, our forces were eventually joined by the token forces of other states; together, these units served as an O.A.S. peacekeeping force. Having intervened in April 1965, United States units left the Dominican Republic in June 1966. They did so with the reasonable assurance of success, since there was no prospect of a guerrilla movement emerging phoenix-like from defeat. There was no such prospect because there had never been a guerrilla movement to defeat.

The circumstances that made this success possible in the Dominican Republic do not exist today. Barring a political miracle, we would not be able to get any semblance of O.A.S. sanction for intervening in El Salvador. The best we could hope for is that given the chronic ineptitude and near paralysis of the O.A.S. at critical moments, it would prove unable to take any clear course of action. A denial of the Organization's blessing would scarcely prove fatal, though it would represent a diplomatic defeat. More serious would be the expected condemnation of military action by many states of the hemisphere. To their voices would no doubt be added those of most third world governments and of several major allies as well.

Does it matter that much of the world would condemn our action if our choice in the end is one between condemnation for having intervened, and contempt for having bowed to defeat? Our defeat in Central America would incur no little contempt. It would do so, moreover, among many who would also be shrill in their condemnation of our taking military action. These responses are more often than not two sides of the same coin. A preoccupation with avoiding the disapproval of others may entail a heavy price in a world that is still influenced far more by precept than by example—even the best of examples.

Still, the condemnation of others would affect our own judgment. It would add to a public restiveness over the

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prospect of a prolonged stay of American forces in El Salvador. Whatever the initial disposition of these forces, so long as they remained in El Salvador they would convey the impression of being an army of occupation. In the wake of the guerrillas' defeat, the pressures to bring the force home would be considerable. Yet it could be brought home within a brief period only at the grave risk of compromising the objectives for which it was sent. There can be no repetition, then, of the Dominican intervention. In the case of El Salvador, it would not do to remove American forces after "only" a year. If the risk of the guerrillas' return in force were to be avoided, the troops would have to stay for a much longer period. Given the expected reaction at home and abroad to a potentially open-ended stay, this or a successor Administration would likely find itself involved in a domestic and diplomatic headache of ever-growing proportions. Reluctant even to attempt the imposition of a viable political system, and probably unable to do so, yet unwilling to abandon the country to a threat that was never effectively removed, we might well find ourselves confronted with the same dilemma that had initially prompted our intervention.

THE HAZARDS and uncertainties of intervention thus seem no less than the hazards and uncertainties of the present middle course. Are there more promising alternatives? Congressional critics, along with many others, continue to insist that there is an alternative course but that the Administration has persistently rejected it. The argument that we should seriously pursue the course of a negotiated settlement has several versions. The favored version is that we give primary responsibility for achieving a settlement to the Contadora group—that is to Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama. Unfortunately, however, there is no Contadora group, save in name. Each of these states has taken a different position toward Central American developments. None has been willing to apply any serious form of pressure in Central America and none really has the power to do so. Even if they were willing to employ such power as they dispose, the question would persist: to what ends would this power be employed? The answer is no more apparent today than it has ever been.

The states of the region may yet play a useful role but only if it is one subordinate to our own. Their efforts are no substitute for the lead we must take. That lead cannot be defined, as it often is today, primarily in terms of promoting needed social and economic reforms. The prescription of fundamental reforms as the lodestar of Central American policy is an appealing one to many. It is also rather absurd as a solution to present dilemmas of policy. Even if we knew what reforms were needed to ensure political stability, our knowledge would be of little use without the requisite political stability for implementing them. The goal for which efforts at basic reform would be made, it turns out, forms the essential condition for effectively undertaking these reforms. The emphasis on basic reforms as the key to an effective policy in Central America represents a flight from realism in policy. The policy dilemmas we face here and now cannot be resolved by the institution of social and economic reforms, however meritorious.

Whether they can be resolved at all is the great and unanswered question. Clearly, it is not for those who endorse the Administration's view of the interests at stake today in El Salvador. Nor is it for those who remain persuaded that the Administration's middle course will yet prove successful. But for those of us who neither quite share this view of interest nor remain sanguine over the course presently taken on behalf of interest, the policy issue in El Salvador is anything but clear-cut and simple. Either defeat or intervention is likely to exact a considerable price. The awareness of this continues to make the middle course attractive by comparison. Should the middle course clearly appear to be failing, many insist there will be time and occasion enough to consider alternatives. This is, in effect, the logic of Administration policy to date. It is the logic that may yet necessitate the choice of intervention or defeat and of making the choice in the worst of circumstances.

Unwilling to risk this prospect, some argue that we should now make the decision to put the Salvadoran government and Army on notice that there is a limit to the support we will give them and that this limit falls well short of sending combat forces. This is, it would seem, the unstated premise of the above-mentioned interagency working paper. Why else the need for "a new and reliable contract" outlining what the Salvadorans must do to win and what we will do to help? William Pfaff recently put the matter in these general terms: "It seems a truism that if a government is incapable of governing or controlling its own territory and imposing order among its population—when it has been given reasonable assistance, sufficient to compensate for assistance given to its internal enemies, it then becomes necessary to question not only whether that government will survive but whether it deserves to survive."

WE HAVE considered this "truism" before, in Vietnam. We spurned it then and may well do so again. Attractive in principle, it does not cover the practical issues of policy. While preventing our taking the ultimate step of intervention, it does not avoid those consequences otherwise attending the downfall of a client government. If we do not intervene in El Salvador and the guerrillas win, we will have avoided the particular consequences that may attach to intervention. We will not have avoided the consequences attached to the defeat of a government we sought to protect. These consequences, moreover, may be greater the more determined we are in fulfilling the requirement of "reasonable assistance." Our good faith in fulfilling this requirement may also more deeply engage our prestige and credibility if and when the assistance fails in its purpose. This, rather than the prospect of intervention, is what many observers fear is now happening in the case of El Salvador.

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An Imposed Political Solution ?

There is no clear and satisfactory way out of the Central American policy riddle. The difficulty arises not so much from the nature of the interests at stake or from the risks attached to the various courses of action as from the absence of any course that promises to conserve interest without exacting a disproportionate price.

Not the least part of that price is domestic. Although Central American policy has been made the plaything of partisan causes, the growing debate over this policy does reflect serious differences. It will not do simply to dismiss opponents of Administration policy as misguided. The policy they oppose has so far failed to elicit anything resembling broad public support. Central America will not have the domestic consequences of Vietnam, even if, in the end, we intervene in El Salvador. But it need not result in these consequences to prove destructive to the fragile consensus on foreign policy we have in this country today. If Vietnam has taught us anything, it is that very few interests are worth pursuing at the risk of sacrificing such domestic consensus as we may enjoy. Israel's recent experience in Lebanon has again driven home this lesson for democratic societies.

CHILDREN BEARING COFFIN OF SALVADORAN MESSENGER KILLED DURING DECEMBER ARMY OFFENSIVE (SUSAN MEISELAS/MAGNUM PHOTOS)

Is there a course of action that might preserve interest while avoiding the domestic consequences of intervention? The one remaining prospect is some form of power sharing. To date power sharing has not received serious consideration, whether from the Administration and its supporters or from opponents of Administration policy. So long as a successful military solution in El Salvador appeared likely, a refusal to consider power sharing was understandable. Given the recent course of the conflict, the continued refusal to do so appears much less reasonable.

There are many good reasons for skepticism over the prospects for power sharing in El Salvador. The most commonly cited reason, however, is not one—that power sharing has never worked. Power sharing of the sort that might be undertaken in El Salvador has never been attempted in the postwar period. It was not attempted in Eastern Europe, where the Soviet Army enforced Moscow's version of power sharing. Nor was it subsequently attempted in Laos, where there was no outside force to oversee the power sharing arrangement that was agreed upon and where the geographical position of the country rendered enforcement of the best of arrangements very difficult. By contrast, in El Salvador, power sharing could be undertaken with a substantial prospect of success: because the United States has considerable potential leverage over the Salvadoran Army and government; because the present balance of forces within El Salvador does not as yet markedly favor either side; because it is possible that a power sharing arrangement could be overseen by an international force composed of units of those states, regional and European, that while having been quite critical of our policy are anxious to forestall either a F.M.L.N. victory or an American military intervention; and finally, of course, because of the sanctions we might ultimately take against the guerrillas should they violate the understandings on which power sharing would be based.

These are the favorable circumstances that prompt Piero Gleijeses to conclude that power sharing in El Salvador might well work. Although granting that "skepticism may be the better part of wisdom," Gleijeses argues that we can control the power sharing process in its various stages. Should the enterprise nevertheless break down because of guerrilla recalcitrance or bad faith, the Administration would then be in a far better position, both at home and abroad, to justify a new measure of support for the Salvadoran regime.

The great risk incurred by pursuing a power sharing course is that the Salvadoran government and Army might fall apart once we signaled our abandonment of the present course. Against this risk must be set the instinct of self-preservation, which, in the end, is likely to prevail. There is no gainsaying the point, though, that power sharing would be at best a difficult process to implement, and this despite the relatively favorable circumstances present in El Salvador, and despite the fact that power sharing is much less a negotiated than an imposed solution. But the virtues of power sharing must be assessed against the alternatives. If the alternatives are roughly of the nature depicted in these pages, power sharing holds out more than a little attraction.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Decline and Pall

Hanna K.
(Universal)

Heat and Dust
(Universal Classics)

When Costa-Gavras's *Missing* came along early in 1982, the flak flew. The film purported to tell the "truth" about American involvement in the murder of a young American during the anti-Allende coup of 1973 in Chile. Those previously convinced one way or the other about our government's guilt either protested or celebrated. For myself, not markedly less interested in the truth than most others, I thought the film a mess of cheap implications, unsubstantiated, playing to the applause of those eager to believe in Washington's guilt (TNR, February 17 and March 10, 1982). Washington may indeed be guilty in the matter, but *Missing* proved it to no one except those who thought so beforehand.

Equally flabby as the film's "case," and surely linked to it, was the way it was made: without the authority and incisiveness that had marked such previous Costa-Gavras pictures as *Z* and *The Confession* and *State of Siege*. *Missing* was the work of a terrible tiger who had of his own free will walked into a gilded cage.

He's still there. What's worse, his new film, *Hanna K.*, isn't likely to provoke anything like the flak surrounding the last one: *Hanna K.* doesn't really *exist* sufficiently to excite anyone very much. The setting is Israel, and the subject itself could be, was probably meant to be, provocative: Israeli prejudice against Palestinian rights. But the script treats the subject with such patent cheapness, such marketplace ambiguity, that few people with strong views are likely to waste time and energy on it. It doesn't have even the specious credibility of *Missing*.

The only good sequence is the first. (Most of the picture was shot in Israel; this first sequence, says *Variety*, was shot in Italy.) In the dimness before dawn, Israeli troops bring Arab terrorists out of a house in the country. The soldiers then discover an Arab hiding in a well. The house is blown up, the Arabs are taken away. The lightening air is tense with the resigned grimness of all concerned. That, to all serious intent, is where the film ends.

The man taken from the well claims that he is not a member of the terrorist band: he hid when the soldiers approached because he had entered the country illegally in connection with property of his that had been confiscated. He is tried. He is defended by Jill Clayburgh, an American-born Jew, whose parents had survived the Holocaust; she has moved to Israel, taken a law degree in Jerusalem, and is now a member of a firm there.

She is also separated from a French husband who lives in Paris, loves her, and comes to Israel like a yo-yo whenever she pulls the string. She is also the lover of the district attorney whom she is battling in this trial. She is also pregnant by the district attorney. These plot contrivances, plus many more, including a later affair with the Arab defendant, concentrate so vulgarly on concocted tribulations, are so patently devised to make Clayburgh into a pillar of strength by day and a pillow of love by night, that *Hanna K.* quickly merits the dated and detestable tag, a Woman's Picture.

The ostensible subject of anti-Palestinian prejudice does skitter along the background. Clayburgh's elderly boss, the head of her law firm, does make one unequivocal statement: after several thousand years of suffering, he says, if Jews have to be prejudiced in order to protect a homeland, they have the right to be. But the story waffles even on driving this point home: it's not clear at the end whether the Arab in question is innocent and unjustly persecuted or whether he indeed is the terrorist that some think he is. In any case, the subject's primary function is to serve as a platform on which our heroine can act out her amorous and other problems.

Bald exploitation of political themes is so common in films, especially American films, that only the exceptions are notable. *Hanna K.* is not an exception. But, for a time, Costa-Gavras himself seemed an exception—before he made his political films under American sponsorship or with the American market chiefly in mind. In *Missing* and his new film, he has turned from the convictions of his early films, however flawed they might be, to bold pussyfooting: courage that is merely laminated commerce.

Much the same must be said about the scriptwriter, Franco Solinas. His previous work, such as *State of Siege* for Costa-Gavras and several pictures for Gillo Pontecorvo, burned with belief, even if they were imperfect. Here he is just hacking away, with the dubious consolation that he is hacking at a political subject. However, Solinas presumably cannot be blamed for some of the fragmentation by editing: surely he intended some use for the German journalist who, in the film, is carefully introduced, then never seen again. Presumably he is not responsible for the translation of his dialogue into English. When trouble develops around Clayburgh's child, she says, "All this fuss over a few drops of sperm." When her

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Danton. Andrzej Wajda's best-directed film, one of Gerard Depardieu's best performances. The script is too patently made topical, but it's a gripping, thick-textured work.

The Grey Fox. Charming geriatric high jinks. In 1901, an ex-con, after thirty-three years in jail, becomes a genteel train robber.

Pandora's Box/Diary of a Lost Girl. German films, both 1929, directed by G.W. Pabst with the American Louise Brooks. Vivid instances of the "New Objectivity."

Zelig. Woody Allen's very good idea, very well introduced, very abruptly dropped.

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husband finally has a chance to speak privately with her, he says (so help me), "Alone at last."

The use of English as the language of the film, which involves some ridiculous contradictions, is linked of course to the use of an American star. But Clayburgh! She is so enervated that she is enervating. What she lacks in vitality, in flavor, in authenticity, in sex appeal, she compensates for, to some small degree, with unwitting amusement—via her lisp. Near the beginning, a colleague asks her how she feels about her work in this trial. She is meant to reply, "Rather useless," but it comes out "Rather youthleth." And that's just the beginning.

Heat and Dust is two films, interwoven; one of them is delicately and engagingly done. The whole script was written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from her novel of the same name, which I haven't read, and the film was made, as her screenplays always are, by the director James Ivory and the producer Ismail Merchant. One story deals with India under the British in the 1920s; it centers on the young wife of a British official and her (eventual) affair with an Indian potentate, the Nawab. The other story deals with the present-day grandniece of that Englishwoman, who after some rough-and-tumble in London has come to India seeking inner peace.

In the 1920s strand, Ivory does the best directing of his that I've seen. Distinctive differences—of houses, customs, parties, games, boredoms—are well evoked and held in neat balance. Walter Lassally photographs it all with respect for the exotic, but without adulation. A flawless cast creates the two societies, maintained by tensions as well as by amity, both within the Indian group and within the British group as well as with each other. A newcomer named Greta Scacchi is enchanting as the young wife, and Shashi Kapoor, a familiar figure, is excellent as the Nawab, affectingly smitten, affectingly rankled.

The only trouble with Strand One is that, fundamentally, its story is quite ordinary and makes little point. Strand Two, which is spliced through it, not told later, is apparently meant to supply that point, with modern irony; but it utterly fails to do so. The situations of the 1920s woman and her grandniece have no resemblance whatsoever; besides, the story of Strand Two is even less interesting. This is in part due to the insipid performance by Julie Christie as the mod agonist in search of her soul. Christie is more personable than Clayburgh but not much more gifted.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Serban Under Siege

The Rumanian director, Andrei Serban, recently completed the fourth in his cycle of Chekhov productions, *Uncle Vanya* (La Mama), and was rewarded with a storm of criticism, including a double whammy in *The New York Times* (daily and Sunday), and a fire bombing from John Simon in *New York* who concluded his attack by insinuating that Jean-Claude van Itallie's translations might be plagiarisms. Serban is a friend and associate of mine—his previous Chekhov production was performed last season at the American Repertory Theater—so I can hardly pretend to objectivity in the matter. But since I believe only *Newsweek*'s Jack Kroll accurately represented Serban's intentions in *Uncle Vanya*, I will accept my lumps from those who want to charge me with prejudice or self-interest as the price of trying to correct what I perceive to be an artistic injustice.

Not that I expect to change any minds. Opinions about Serban are too emotional and there is also a notion abroad that critical dissension is ill-advised (I have been rebuked in more than one place lately for disputing prevailing opinions about an artist or a production). Although such debates were once considered a lively form of discourse, critical disagreements are often regarded today as breaking majority ranks. This current rage for consensus may explain why Serban's controversial productions evoke such heated reactions: it presumes an authorized interpretation of the play. The received opinion about Serban is that he delights in vandalizing cherished classical works and desecrating the memory of helpless playwrights: "Would Chekhov Have Embraced this Vanya?" reads the rhetorical headline in Benedict Nightingale's inaugural review as Walter Kerr's replacement for the *Times*. The question suggests that the critic, not the artist, is the best reader of the playwright's intentions, the most faithful defender of his text.

The tumult over *Vanya* reflects the traditional uneasiness between the analytical intelligence and the interpretive imagination. One does not have to believe that a play can support any harebrained or lunatic interpretation in order to recognize that theater is not absolute, not immutable, not frozen, but rather in a continual state of process and change, and therefore not subject to fixed concepts of authorial intention or "definitive" production.

Precisely because plays are written to be staged rather than read, there is always more to be learned from the explorations of a fine creative instinct than from the analytical studies of even the keenest critical intelligence, though in the best of worlds these would not be incompatible. Since the territory explored is uncharted, this sometimes requires a leap of faith, which should be less difficult to make when the director enjoys a record of genuine achievement. Such a record even his most severe detractors would hesitate to deny Serban. Not all of his productions have been completely fulfilled, but in the last decade he has altered our vision of innumerable classical and modern works, subjecting them to a fertile imagination which is, at the same time, traditional and contempory. If it is true that his imagination is sometimes excessively fertile, it is also true, as Blake tells us, that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

Serban's *Uncle Vanya* is occasionally excessive, but it is also often wise, perceptive, penetrating, funny, and, in my opinion, very moving. Whether Chekhov would have approved I cannot say, though this is a question Serban continually asks himself; but considered strictly as an exploratory "essay" rather than the final word on the play, Serban's version emphatically adds to our understanding of it. For one thing, it is a strong corrective to Stanislavsky's morbid behaviorism, the basis for most

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"definitive" Chekhov productions of recent vintage, though Chekhov himself detested it. Whereas Stanislavsky is basically psychological, Serban is metaphorical. The Stanislavsky actor pursues "existence," the intentions and objectives of his character; Serban's actor looks for "essence," a characteristic gesture or style. Stanislavsky leaves Chekhov squatting amidst the painted flats and Victorian upholstery of the nineteenth century. Without doing violence to the playwright's spirit, Serban brings Chekhov into the twentieth, in company with artists he influenced, such as Samuel Beckett, and even those he didn't, such as Bertolt Brecht.

Serban's metaphorical strategy begins with the setting. As he said in an interview, his inspiration for the design for *Vanya* came from a passing remark of Serebryakov's that the house was like a maze. Serban turns the simile into a metaphor—Santo Loquasto's design *is* a maze, a large wooden labyrinth of ramps and gullies and platforms, with a single depressed area in the center like a sunken cellar. The apparent intention is to envelop the spectator in the action, as if he were another inhabitant of the house, but even though the characters often address the audience directly, the effect is curiously distancing: Sonia begins the play reading her final speech from a book as though it were already part of literature, the stage manager calls out the offstage cues from a visible booth, and much of the action is viewed from above.

It is obviously Serban's plan to withdraw *Uncle Vanya* from realism and return it to the theater, and thus he never lets the spectator forget that the actors are acting (or the director directing). For this purpose, he has devised self-conscious extensions for his company, primarily derived from broad farce and high melodrama. Farce and melodrama are the prime ingredients of Chekhov's style, for all his efforts to conceal this through buried actions and complicated characters, and in *Vanya*, an extreme example of the mixture with its on-stage shooting and interrupted love scenes, Serban pushes this style to its extreme limit, excising everything, in this one hundred-minute version, that does not accommodate broad strokes. Yelyena, in a remarkably volatile performance by Diane Venora, is played as a woman continually on the verge of a swoon, by turns neurasthenic, vacant, and flamboyant, striking poses out of nineteenth-century fashion magazines and declaiming her lines (sometimes accompanied by tenor arias from Bellini's *I Puritani*) as if she were being played by Ranavskaya in *The Seagull*. It is a performance that makes the operatic Yelyena seem at the same time extremely shallow and yet somehow oddly touching, particularly when she grabs Sonia's feet before departing and begs her forgiveness. F. Murray Abraham's Dr. Astrov is intelligence in decay, a drunken sot who really does loathe his moustache, doing a precarious tightrope walk on one of the ramps before falling in a heap and saying, "Excuse me, I'm not wearing a tie." Frances Conroy is severe and strained, on the verge of breakdown, yet never lacking the compassion that brings Vanya his only solace.

Vanya himself, as played by Joseph Chaikin, is a sad clown, an aging child, out of silent film comedy. Chaikin's Vanya has been severely criticized by virtually every reviewer for a single piece of stage business—he sits on Sere-

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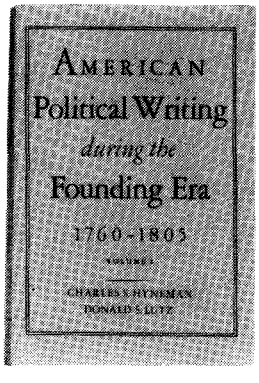

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byrakov's lap after being told of his intention to sell the estate. Yet, this is clearly Serban's effort to dramatize how it feels to be a helpless child in a disintegrating household. Chaikin, who has a heart condition, did not achieve the required peaks of hysteria in his climactic scene the night I saw it, but the actor enjoyed at least one really stunning moment, when he came upon Yelena and Astrov embracing. In his slept-in suit, his pants flopping over his shoes, holding a bunch of flowers in his hand, he stood watching his betrayal for minutes, soundless, expressionless, motionless, until, a Chaplinesque stoic, he turned helplessly on his heel and walked away. The same mute despair concludes the play. Sonia, in a passionately angry outburst, exhorts Vanya to work as the only antidote against despair, after which the two of them set about their tasks like robots—the mechanization of meaningless labor—as Tyelyegin, playing the balalaika and singing, whirls in ever-widening circles.

If you open yourself to these images, some of them will etch themselves indelibly on your mind, even when at first they seem gratuitous. Van Itallie's (wholly original) adaptation is the crispest and most powerful extant (I love the "He says no," which ends the second act), Jennifer Tipton's lighting is luminous, and the company, despite a few weaknesses in the cast, is stylistically uniform. This *Vanya*, in short, is another genuine achievement by Serban, who remains one of a handful of authentically innovative directors in a field normally characterized by flat, prosaic, unadventurous dullness. Remarkably, it is not the drones but the directors with the courage of their imaginations who are now being driven from the theater by a discouraging press. If this continues, I fear, Serban will abandon play production for work in opera where he is less abused, in countries which value and welcome his unusual talents.

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Fatal Vision
by Joe McGinniss

(Putnam's, 704 pp., $17.95)

Even murder should have dignity. How can we justify the passage of brutality from the police blotter or tabloid to the permanence of a book, except as a necessary step toward restoring meaning and individuality to the victims or the killers? Murder books such as Meyer Levin's *Compulsion*, Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, or Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* have looked for meaning even in the unprovoked or random murder of strangers, furthering our awareness of murder as a crisis of morality, psyche, and culture. *Fatal Vision* by Joe McGinniss is different. It takes a crime of intimacy rich in meaning and refuses it significance, coherence, or explanation. It contains a vision of death that once enabled McGinniss to write of Robert Kennedy's assassination: "*I had been there, on the inside, as a Kennedy had died*. It seemed the ultimate status symbol of the Sixties."

Issues of meaning, or morality, or motive recede when death seems less significant for itself than for the interest it arouses in others. CBS's "60 Minutes" presents Joe McGinniss and his subject, Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald, former Green Beret officer convicted after nine-and-a-half years of murdering his wife and two young daughters. McGinniss, invited by MacDonald before the trial to write his story, believes MacDonald guilty. MacDonald, jogging and working out in a Southern California jail, declares his innocence. Mike Wallace goes amiably from one to the other. He admires McGinniss's effort: "Three years of research!" He admires MacDonald's superb physical condition. McGinniss and MacDonald disagree on the matter of murder, but why quibble? They share the heady profits of *Fatal Vision*. One does not expect large meanings to surface in television interviews. But, surprisingly, McGinniss's book goes even further: it renders seven hundred

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pages' worth of facts and viewpoints as adding up to nothing. It appeals so completely to the desire for pictures without captions that it is virtually a celebration of inexplicability.

MacDonald's crime certainly is not easy to explain. MacDonald himself explains it this way: On February 17, 1970, he lay wounded with a neatly punctured lung in his small Fort Bragg apartment while his wife and children lay clubbed and stabbed to death nearby. MacDonald claimed three men, one wearing an Army jacket, had attacked him while he slept on the living room sofa and had gone on to kill his family. A blonde woman in a floppy hat had held a candle to the scene, chanting "Acid is groovy! Kill the pigs!" "Pigs" had been written in blood on the bedboard above the body of MacDonald's five-months-pregnant wife. Less than six months had passed since the Manson family had invaded Sharon Tate's mansion, killing the pregnant movie star. Arousing sympathy and suspicion, the death of the MacDonalds and MacDonald's subsequent position as the Army's chief suspect catapulted MacDonald to national celebrity.

MACDONALD WAS both good enough and too good to be true. Here was a winner, a football player and star high school student from a working-class background who had won a scholarship to Princeton and married his pretty, socially superior high school sweetheart. He had excelled at college, graduated with honors from medical school, distinguished himself in a demanding internship in surgery at Columbia Presbyterian, and been accepted for residency in orthopedic surgery at Yale. He was even patriotic; enlisting in the Green Berets, he confided to friends his hope for an assignment in Vietnam. That the Army could consider him a prime suspect reinforced liberal disenchantment with all things military. Allard Lowenstein offered him help and advice. The possibility that this conservatives' darling might well have been engulfed by counterculture junkies aroused the compassion of Colonel Rock of Fort Bragg, who saw him as the All-American Boy who had married the All-American Girl. In the nine-and-a-half years that passed between the deaths of his wife and children and the appeals and Supreme Court review that preceded his trial and conviction on three

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counts of murder, MacDonald was almost everybody's hero. He became Director of Emergency Services at a Long Beach, California, hospital, author of a textbook on emergency techniques, and a lecturer on the treatment of child abuse. For many young women who sailed in and out of his life, he was simply Mr. Wonderful. Even his juror, a former Green Beret upset at the guilty verdict the physical evidence obliged him to give, wept.

The gap between what MacDonald seemed to be and what he did is not a distance McGinniss cares to negotiate. He alternates "The Voice of Jeffrey MacDonald," composed of tapes of MacDonald giving his view of his life, with evidentiary material drawn from the investigations, hearings, and trial, and with interviews of family members, particularly MacDonald's in-laws who began as his supporters and became his accusers. Each person is presented as the star of his own story; no one's words are questioned or challenged. MacDonald and his amazing murders remain irreconcilable, incoherent. Yet it is clear he and his act exist in an elaborate relation of paradox: the slayer of children who is an expert on child abuse, the creator of bloody crisis who expertly redeems others from bloody trauma. These are selves existing in a tight, explicit relationship whose terms, if not conventionally rational, are not inexplicable either. The tragedy invites each reader's explanation.

MACDONALD'S CRIME seems to me to dramatize crises of authority and vulnerability as they are experienced in marriage. His need to be the All-American Boy is not the simple wish McGinniss makes it seem. To be, and to want to be, the perfection of a type is to express a crisis of individuality, in which cultural norms are used as means of controlling a sense of anomie. Rigid and perfectionistic, the voice of MacDonald seems. pitched to cultural myths rather than tested experience. Stereotypes have clearly given him his notion of a coherent world. To be an intellectual John Wayne, a Green Beret paratrooper who is also a brilliant surgeon, was a fantasy he could fulfill. If popular culture had given him a winning definition of what it meant to be a man at war or at work, it had failed to provide a comparable guide to intimacy.

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1953–IKE order reaffirms FBI's responsibility to ferret out employee disloyalty and makes it mandatory that any accused person be immediately dismissed and reinstated only at the discretion of the agency head. (see July 2)

1961–JFK tells the American Newspapers Publishers Association before publishing to ask not only "is it news?" but also "is it in the interest of national security?"

1970–*N.Y. Daily News* reports that acting FBI director Gray destroyed Watergate evidence at Ehrlichman's request. (see Oct. 15)

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between the sexes is the sort to be found in old football movies. His woman must be beautiful and bright, a cheerleader whose intelligence is devoted to ingenious praise. His wife, Colette, had written him letters consisting of wonderful moments he had created. She was his accomplice in helping him maintain an illusory perfection. Never criticizing him, jumping to his every wish, she pleased and pleased, permitting him to seem like he had all the answers. Vulnerable and dependent, she was the living image of his authority as a man. For this he clearly loved her, married her when he was a Princeton sophomore and she was "accidentally" pregnant, and "saved" her, as he says, from death from medical error after the delivery of their second child. If he had never been faithful to her, he had also never permitted any other woman to diminish her importance to him.

Colette is so sketchily described one can say little about her. She was an All-American Girl who favored pink and Peter Pan collars, the sort taught to succeed through marriage to the right man. Her mother had advised her to ditch another, less talented boyfriend for MacDonald, who was clearly destined for success. Obligingly she fell in love with the winner. That she found something deeper in him is suggested by her depression when her father committed suicide when she was young. Although her stepfather loved her as his own, she must surely have been attracted to MacDonald's confident exterior, his self-assertiveness. Here was someone who would never sink, who would structure her life. Together they planned a future based on his running the straight and narrow path from Princeton to Columbia, to a Yale residency and hoped-for faculty appointment. These prospects enabled her to tolerate isolation with her babies, their lack of money, and perhaps even his infidelities. When he, tired of intellectual pressures, wanted a change of pace and enlisted, she experienced it as a threat to the marriage.

MacDonald's successes had given him the confidence to choose what he wanted. Her pregnancies and compliance, while binding him to her, had eroded her sense of possibility. At 26, already the mother of two and survivor of two difficult deliveries, she was sinking into depression. Losing control of her body, she forgot to take her birth control pills and again became "accidentally" pregnant. MacDonald responded politely to the pregnancy they had agreed would not take place, but made it pointedly clear he would be touring with an Army boxing team when she delivered. Responsibility was no longer keeping him in line. As she grew unusually heavy, he dieted. As she became apathetic and sullen, he looked for a third moonlighting job. She ceased to be of interest; he could recall her messy kitchen drawers, but not the subject of the course she took. She became enraged at his freedoms. When he wanted to spend money on a stereo, she brought up past, present, and future bills. She had reached the age of protest. She had shown him as the failure he had tried not to be, the sort of man who lets you down. Her unhappiness tarnished his self-image, and aroused not his compassion, but his rage. She could be all or nothing to him, but he could not meet her in the middle range of criticism, disagreement, compromised expectations. On the night of the murder neighbors heard her voice raised in anger. In silencing that voice, MacDonald encapsulated and preserved his experience of her as an accepting angel, his cheering, adoring "epitome of womanhood." By reducing her to nothing, he restored her to being all.

MACDONALD'S WORK placed him in a reverse relation to murder. He had an irreproachable reputation in emergency medicine and surgery. Working sixty to seventy hours per week, he had the chance to relive in every possible way but one the moment of crisis that altered his life. What drove him? Was it remorse, the search amid other people's traumas for the meaning of his own? Is it an attraction to moments when he has power over life and death? Medicine has always offered people the chance to play God with other people's lives. MacDonald's need to cast himself as savior of the woman he is convicted of killing suggests the appeal of this role. Did MacDonald, enraged, "knowing" he was not destined for a joyless marriage, take the small step of playing with other people's deaths? Would "God" descend to divorce courts? Could murder have seemed another triage procedure conducted by a doctor who "knew" with self-righteous fervor that his life was worth more than their deaths, that their survival as perfect creatures was dependent on his life and their deaths? As she and their daughters became enshrined in memory, they became the "perfect" family and he the ever pious husband.

If this perverse logic was MacDonald's, it is not surprising that he insists on his innocence. He may be less a hypocrite than an ideologue, his own apostle bent on establishing the perfection of his wife and his own moral excellence

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as fervently as the warmer, more sympathetic Mrs. Harris was bent on proving the great worth of the Scarsdale Diet doctor and the specialness of their long affair. For the middle-class transgressor, perhaps bloodshed purges loved ones of their flaws, leaving only sublimity. In asking us to believe him innocent, MacDonald asks for that faith Tertullian gave to God when he said: "I believe because it's impossible."

In not connecting MacDonald the killer to MacDonald the healer, McGinniss, in a sense, complies. Belief in inexplicable guilt, like belief in inexplicable innocence, ignores the exploration and judgment in which human understanding takes place. As the prosecutor bypassed such issues by obtaining conviction on physical evidence alone, believing that if he could prove MacDonald killed, he did not have to prove he was the sort of man who could kill, so McGinniss hopes, less successfully, to find a physical cause for the murders. Diet pills, he suggests, might have triggered an uncontrollable rage in MacDonald. Yet he also reveals this possibility is not supported by lab tests taken the night of the murder, which show no traces of drugs or alcohol in MacDonald's bloodstream. The hope for a "smoking pill" is ultimately a wish for an answer that will raise no questions, a solution without an explanation.

Inexplicability is an intellectual and emotional alternative to dealing with complexity. Eroding connections between self and act, sliding over the nature of an intimacy that culminated in a triple murder, it releases McGinniss from the frustration of having to challenge anyone. Neither MacDonald nor Colette exist for him as people, only as unfathomable curios. Released from human meanings and connections that sustain individuality and dignity, they seem to exist only on the level of chance, of circumstance. In such a place, de Sade's hope finds a harrowing fulfillment: "Murder only deprives the victim of his first life; a means must be found of depriving him of his second. . . . "

JOSEPHINE HENDIN

Josephine Hendin teaches English at New York University. She is the author of *Vulnerable People: A View of American Literature Since 1945* (Oxford University Press) and is writing a book on violence in American literature.

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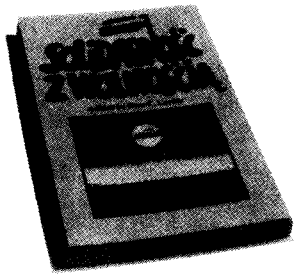

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DEFENSE OF POESY

The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property by Lewis Hyde

(Random House, 327 pp., $17.95, $7.95 Vintage paper)

The novelist John Keeble told me this story. He was living in Seattle and working at an industrial job when he found out that he had been accepted at the Iowa Writers Workshop. However, it was a last minute thing, classes were starting in a week, he was just scraping by and had no money to move his young family. An older friend of his at Boeing offered to give him a hand. Working straight through the weekend he built a frame for Keeble's pick-up truck to make it into a small van, then helped him to pack and load all his movables. By Sunday night the job was done, in time for Keeble to be on his way to his new prospects. His cup running over, he said to his friend, "I don't know how to repay you." "You can't," he replied. "You have to do it for someone else. Pass it on."

The story has meant a lot to me. It has taken me out of pettiness and selfishness at times in my work by reminding me of the obligation we all have to pass on the good that we have received. In so doing, it reaches into a part of the self that is not for hire and to another part by which we are attached to the rest of humanity, and it makes a connection between them. It also provides an image to set against the calculation and greed that swell up in a society awash in self-interest and consumerism. But I've recently come to see that the story goes well beyond the uses I've made of it. It's like a cutting from a vigorous, complex, and beautiful plant whose roots go wide and deep into the earth: in this case, the strata of human nature and experience. They go back to societies whose whole way of life was built around gift-exchange and to a folk wisdom contained in a global literature that deals with the nature of material and interior gifts, and to the religions, including our own, that began by thinking of little else. Some of this wealth of customs, sentiments, insights, and creeds survive in and illuminate our own gift-exchanges; they also can be found at the heart of the highest mode of gift-exchange that remains with us—the creative process itself. I've been learning about all this from a splendid new writer named Lewis Hyde whose book *The Gift* with its esoteric but perfectly apt subtitle, *Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, seems to light up everything it touches, including the reader's mind.

I imagine that Hyde and Keeble and his friend would understand each other immediately. They come from the same place, morally speaking, and share a similar background, Hyde having worked as a carpenter and electrician and a counselor on an alcoholic ward to support his literary interests. He also comes out of the 1960s, the foolishness and smugness of the counterculture stripped away, its articles of faith in nature, community, and spirit presented in an enlightened and tempered form. He most seems like a young Robert Bly or Gary Snyder. Touch his sentences and you touch a man who is going his own way, traveling far, but who is glad to have your company. He will show you the wider vistas of otherness and credence to which we still belong once we get away from what he calls "the small ego" and the "commodity society."

Hyde tells us at the start that he came to his subject in an existential way; that is, as a self-employed poet, translator, and scholar he had gifts that the society he lived in didn't support and barely valued. Indeed, in its increasing reliance on forms of work that are highly rationalized, routinized, impersonal, and in its awarding of status not so much to what one does or is but to what one consumes, Hyde's America can be viewed as the antithesis of art. Sensing, too, that poetry and scholarship are gifts that must be bestowed, that the work of the imagination and the documented intuition are not completed until they are carried over, as he puts it, into "the real" by means of publication or its equivalents—that is by public validation and use—the problem of the market for his work came to seem doubly onerous, making him feel trivial as well as poor. Trying to think his way out of this impasse, he became interested in the anthropology, theology, and folk literature of gift-exchange as a commerce within and between tribes, as well as with the natural and spiritual realms that completed and guaranteed the flow of the cycle.

He was particularly struck and instructed by the literature on "the spirit of the gift": the generative principle or "eros" that provided the increase and whose exchange and worship provided the "feeling bond" in the members of the group, the bond that protected the source, fostered solidarity in the group, and conducted its members beyond the personal and tribal ego, beyond nature itself, and into the mysteries of creation. Thus the Northwest Indian tribes treated the first-caught salmon as a visiting chief, then ate it, and then returned the bones to the sea to insure the supply and its return; so, too, the Maori hunters gave some of their birds to priests who brought them back to the forest to feed its "hau"; so, too, the Israelite priests burned the fat of the first-born male sheep and cattle on the altar "as an odor pleasing to the Lord." The person or group who feeds the hau and is fed by it thereby enters a realm of life that underlies creaturely existence and consciousness and endures beyond it. Hyde draws upon the distinction in Greek between its two terms for life:

> *Bios* is limited life, characterized life, life that dies. *Zoe* is the life that endures; it is the thread that runs through bios-life and is not broken when the particular perishes.

From this principle of generation and generosity in cyclical exchange, it is but a step to the creative cycle of the source gift, of the artist's generous and grateful labor by means of his imagination to shape and enliven it, and of its bestowal on his or her community, tradition, faith, and the race itself:

> A circulation of gifts nourishes those parts of our spirit that are not entirely personal, parts that derive from nature, the group, the race, or the gods. Furthermore, although these wider spirits are a part of us, they are not "ours"; they are endowments bestowed upon us. To feed them by giving away the increase they have brought us is to accept that our participation in them brings with it an obligation to preserve their vitality.

The artist, then, wishes to nurture, use, and bestow what he has been given: the gifts of his sources and of his talent. What he has to pass along are the fruits

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of this intercourse, the images, as Hyde finely puts it, which enable the rest of us to imagine our lives. Or, in the famous words of Joseph Conrad, which Hyde quotes twice as a kind of *ur*-text:

> The artist appeals . . . to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder and to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity . . . which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.

As Hyde develops his vast array of sources to provide an ethic/esthetic for the situation of the creative artist, a fascinating and compelling perspective comes into view. On the one hand, it functions as an incisive and startlingly fresh critique of the commodity-exchange society that separates and alienates its members from each other, that despiritualizes life and denatures the world, that fosters the greed, envy, competitiveness, and callousness by which in getting and spending we lay waste our powers: in short, that exploits the essence and maldistributes the increase. At the same time, Hyde takes literature out of the hands of the various elites in which it has been languishing and losing identity and restores it to its rightful place in the human community, the agent of its moral memory and faith, the mover and movement of its spirit. He does so without loss of complexity and subtlety: his understanding of the creative process is phenomenal, his portraits of Whitman and Pound as the culminating examples of art understood as gift-exchange are models of critical imagination, sympathy, and acumen. *The Gift* is a book about life and art by someone who knows and knows.

My one disappointment is that it doesn't come fully forward into the present and deal with the actual situation of art in a commodity society and culture. At the end Hyde tells us that he has come around to believing that the artist, if he watches his step, can make his way without sacrificing his gifts. For sure. But the way is much more problematic than he suggests and I would like to have seen Hyde address it. For example, he writes that there are three primary ways in which modern artists have resolved the problem of their livelihood; they have taken second jobs, found patrons, or placed their work on the market. His notion of a secondary job is "some work more or less unrelated to his art . . . so that when he is creating the work he may turn from questions of market value and labor in the protected gift-sphere." But the way most contemporary writers support themselves is by teaching their art and, as anyone knows who has had much to do with the writing programs and workshops that proliferate like outlets for a profitable new product, there is precisely the temptation to "exploit the essence" that distinguishes commodity-exchange from gift-exchange. My guess is that the publishing marketplace today is finally less dispiriting, devitalizing, isolating, and corrupting than the creative writing one.

On the other hand, Hyde overlooks

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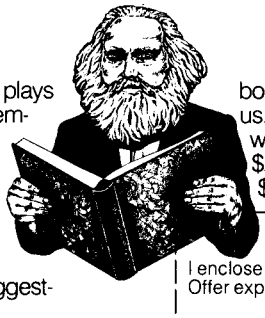

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the development of a place in the literary environment today that comes close to the old gift-society that he describes. I'm thinking of the emergence of a poetry community that operates pretty much outside of the literary marketplace, and is responsible for the substantial increase in poetry readings, magazines, chapbooks, and volumes, as well as in the generosity and solidarity among poets and with their audience. Like its ally, the small-press movement, the situation of poetry today, particularly in its public readings, sometimes reminds one of catacomb Christianity in the Roman Empire: a place of refuge, devotion, and renewal.

I fault Hyde not so much for ducking these matters as for depriving his readers of the clarity of vision he would turn on them. As is, his book has given me more to think and feel about and to try to put to use than anything I've read in a good while. His words, like the saying of Nachman of Bratslav which he quotes, "have no clothes. When one speaks to one's fellows, there arises a simple light and a returning light." Buy two copies of this book: one to feed yourself with and the other to pass on.

TED SOLOTAROFF

Ted Solotaroff has recently edited a collection of stories, *Many Windows* (Harper & Row), from *American Review*.

CONOSHING FOR CASH

Mary Berenson: A Self-Portrait from her Letters and Diaries edited by Barbara Strachey and Jayne Samuels

(Gollancz, 318 pp., £12.95)

Bernard Berenson's reputation has had a curious history. Like Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Virginia Woolf and all the Bloomsberries, he has now become a literary cottage industry. The crowd of biographers and historians who have gathered around him since his death have been more curious about how he lived, whom he knew, and whom he entertained than about what he actually did as an art historian. Berenson's contribution on that subject remains to be properly evaluated.

When I was a student of art history in the late 1940s, the aged B. B. (as he was called by his circle) had reestablished his court at I Tatti near Florence after the war years, and had begun to turn out the mature memoirs and essays which are his principal literary legacy. As a role model for young art historians, however, his name was mud. Richard Offner, Millard Meiss, Erwin Panofsky, and others stood for a more scientific, critical, and rigorous approach to problems of connoisseurship and the history of art; above all, they and their American university colleagues were not tainted with corruption, as Berenson clearly was. He was the most prominent of the experts who certified paintings for the market—and he took a large cut of the profits. In those days many of the European art scholars wrote certificates which often were not worth the paper on which they were written, yet everyone knew that the real opinions of such authorities as Friedlander, Longhi, Venturi, or Valentiner were those they published and defended in their scholarly books and articles. Berenson, however, with his famous "lists," had created an almost devilish machine for translating unsupported opinions of connoisseurship into personal cash.

After his death a whitewashing hagiography began with the memoirs of his longtime secretary and extramarital inamorata, the good but humorless Nicky Mariano. According to her account, life at I Tatti was all serious work, brilliant conversation, and important visitors. She was the self-effacing vestal virgin guarding the holy shrine, preserving the calm and peace the great man required—allowing no mention of nasty business or art dealing ethics. Later the memoirs of John Walker, a disciple of Berenson and formerly director of our National Gallery, reinforced this picture. Of course it was true as far as it went. Conversation at I Tatti, conducted in five or six languages on subjects such as politics, literature, Chinese art, German philosophy, and the favorite theme, the Italian Renaissance, must have been on a high level sometimes (although I suspect gossip really predominated).

It wasn't long, however, before another picture began to emerge. In his memoirs, Kenneth Clark refers to Berenson "perched on the pinnacle of a mountain of corruption." The international art dealer René Gimpel, tells the following story in his diaries:

> Once, in the days when he wasn't so powerful, he said to Bauer, the antique dealer: "A man as scholarly as yourself shouldn't be a dealer, it's horrible to be a dealer." To which Bauer replied: "Between you and me there's no great difference; I'm an intellectual dealer and you're a dealing intellectual." Berenson never forgave him that.

Recently the first half of a monumental biography by Ernest Samuels appeared, confirming some of Berenson's more unattractive traits and carrying his career up to the point of his association with the firm of Duveen before World War I. Then Meryle Secrest published the somewhat sensationalized but nevertheless fascinating biography which concentrated on documenting B. B.'s art dealing activities. Now we have a curious and authentic bit of evidence to add to the emerging truth about Berenson: the letters and diaries of Mary Smith Berenson, his gifted, tormented, and somewhat monstrous wife.

She was the pampered and well-educated daughter of an affluent, devout, and intellectual American Quaker family that settled in England and rapidly acquired connections with the Bloomsbury set. Her younger sister, Alys, became the first wife of Bertrand Russell, and her brother was the essayist Logan Pearsall Smith; Mary Smith herself was married first to an English Catholic Member of Parliament with whom she produced two children before running off to live with Berenson and to "conosh" art with him (their baby-talk term for the exercise of connoisseurship). After her husband's untimely death nine years later, in 1900, she married B. B. Like so many Victorian and Edwardian personalities, Mary was an indefatigable letter writer (she wrote to her dominating and feminist

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mother every day) and the mass of surviving material amounts to more than five million words.

During their triumphal tour of America in 1903, after the success of B. B.'s first trio of books—accounts of the Florentine, the central Italian, and the Venetian painters, incorporating the "lists" of authentic works—Mary and her husband were like a pair of card sharps looking for victims to fleece among the class they called the "squillionaires." At that time Mary herself was very much the professional collaborator; she too was busy writing articles, lecturing, and "conoshing" pictures brought to her for examination. It is clear from these letters, as well as from the evidence in Samuels's book, that Mary, a naturally gifted writer, extensively edited much of B. B.'s prose, which he wrote somewhat awkwardly and only with great effort. She also looked after the finances and seems to have been her husband's eager business partner. It was Mary who counseled him on peacemaking strategies with Isabella Stewart Gardner when she caught him committing fraud. It was Mary who handled the relations with Sir Joseph Duveen and who eagerly opened the daily mail searching for checks. Here is a revealing quotation from one of her letters to Duveen in 1924:

> You pay us half-yearly remittances on account and they are most useful to us, only we never see the accounts! We are in a sense partners in your great Italian adventure but still in spite of many remonstrances, we only know casually and accidentally, as it were, what is going on. I repeat what I have often said that B. B.'s advice would be more valuable to you if he knew what you sold, and how much you got for each picture, and who your clients were. . . . We are in the dark to a degree that really is unnecessary and actually hampering. We are not in the position of people drawing a salary from you, but are your associates. B. B. hasn't your genius for selling, you haven't his knowledge for authenticating, here we need each other. It is true you could get other connoisseurs, but you would run the risk of being badly let down from time to time; and B. B. could advise other firms, but they would not be the great J. D. with whom it is a pleasure and an honour to work. No, we are better together than apart, but we should like to be kept better informed about the sales, and also we *should* like to be able to count on your remittances on account at definite dates, that is to say in January and July.

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What emerges from this inside account of the Berenson menage? Alas, an even worse picture than the recent biographies had presented. While life with Mary, who was growing ever fatter and more nervous, could hardly have been happy, B. B. stands revealed as an all-time rat. He threw tantrums at the slightest provocation, he hated children and wanted none of his own, he cheated his benefactors, he was also a snob who turned his back on his own family. A money-hungry social climber, he was a Jewish anti-Semite. As a scholar, he was vindictive, and jealous of the successes of others in his field.

Although he had a knack for surrounding himself with adoring females who tended to his every comfort, he continually destroyed the tranquility of his carefully arranged life by rages, vendettas, psychosomatic illnesses, and black melancholy. After reading these letters of Mary's, one might still have a drop of envy left for the civilized ambiance of I Tatti and the easy progress of the Berensons through an art-filled Europe as yet unspoiled by modern tourism; not for a moment, however, would one wish to have been part of that entourage. Just under the surface lurked such agonies and deceptions that, as in Ford Maddox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, even murder and suicide would not have come as a surprise.

Both the Berensons had countless infatuations and love affairs, discussed in detail in many of Mary's letters. In spite of judicious editing and excellent connective texts by Mary's granddaughter and Ernest Samuels's wife, there is finally too little literary, intellectual, or historical meat on the bone here. Mary was, ultimately, a very sad figure, but she was not a tragic figure. One tires of the domestic squabbles, apologies, illnesses, and self-pitying complaints. One tires, too, of such passages as the entry in her diary of April 13, 1928, which describes in preposterously fussy detail the rising of her great bulk from bed to perform the many rituals of her "toilet."

In 1931, after an unsuccessful operation, Mary became an invalid and suffered terribly. She lived on, however, and when Nicky Mariano and Berenson were forced to find diplomatic sanctuary in 1943 during the German occupation, Mary was too ill to be moved from I Tatti. She survived long enough to see B. B. again when he returned in late 1944, and her letters to him toward the end, surveying the vicissitudes of fifty-five years together, seem to show that through it all she deeply loved him. Hers is an authentic, if often pathetic, account of life at I Tatti, which one hopes Ernest Samuels will fill out in the second part of his biography—a life which, thanks to the combination of great paintings, big money, eccentric people, and a vanished high life-style, remains irresistibly fascinating.

EUGENE VICTOR THAW

Eugene Victor Thaw is an art dealer who writes occasionally about art.

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CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

A Journey in Ladakh by Andrew Harvey

(Houghton Mifflin, 236 pp., $13.95)

The English have always been a traveling people. From their crowded islands, they have lit out for Patagonia, or the Mediterranean, equatorial Africa, or the deserts of the Middle East, performing all the while an imperial rope-trick: the Englishman temporarily sheds his Britishness, and enters to a troubling depth into the heart of another people. When he returns, he is a little skewed and troublesome, a man who is neither here nor there. Call it the Robinson Crusoe syndrome, a kind of wanderlust and plasticity of soul. There have been legendary travelers: Charles Doughty, T. E. Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence, Wilifred Thessiger. Like the antique travelers, they brought back stories to tell of extraordinary places and peoples, but also of themselves wrestling with their solitary natures. Such stories have often had the overtones of a spiritual progress: a travel story that is also a venture in self-remaking.

The young English poet, Andrew Harvey, has written a book in this tradition. Several years ago, he spent a few months in a region of the Himalaya Mountains near Tibet, known as Ladakh. Harvey had been drawn to Ladakh for several reasons: it is a remote area in which the traditional mountain life has managed to survive; in recent decades, it has become a refuge for a number of Tibetan Buddhist priests who have given new life to local Buddhist practice. Harvey's interest in Buddhism is not casual. He describes himself as an anxious, questing young man, ruffled by the contradictions of growing up, seeking some underlying truth that will reconcile himself to himself. As a child, he had lived in India, and now, as a man, he returns to pick up threads that had been lost.

He travels with his pen in his hand, and the book, a series of highly charged paragraphs, was probably assembled from his journal. His journey to Ladakh becomes a journey toward self-understanding, to which the vivid mountain scenes give substance. Ladakh, as Harvey describes it, is not a destitute realm of the high Himalayas, but a mirror in which the traveler sees himself renewed. The focus of the

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book, then, is double: it tells about Ladakh with its naked, gleaming peaks, and its rocky passes; its hardy white horses that stand beside tiny wheat fields; its ruined monasteries; its laughing, friendly people. It also tells about the traveler, and here Harvey does not always carry his reader with him. The spiritual crisis to which his journey is a response never becomes very real. Perhaps that is why Harvey is so relentless in his pursuit of signs and meanings which he seems to see, with an unfettered romantic urge, in every stone and every cliff. Harvey is rarely content to let a scene live apart from him. Everything must glimmer with foreshadowings of a higher consciousness. The result is a curiously programmatic and premeditated sort of writing. The very Buddhist expansion Harvey speaks of—a tenderly passive, unmolesting attitude, which lets things be in their completeness—is strangely lacking in *A Journey in Ladakh*.

Harvey is at his best with people, and his journey is marked by a series of vivid encounters with bus drivers and travelers, a fast-living Ladakhi guide, a loquacious hotel owner. He meets a Frenchman who sputters nihilistic tirades from Cioran about man's raving fantasy of holiness. He spends an evening with a melancholy Ladakhi scholar who sings holy songs to him, by moonlight, in a garden. He meets a psychologist who comes back to Ladakh year after year, ostensibly to interview the local people, but really as an act of love for this remote and pure place. Somehow these people seem more real than Harvey himself. They are not portentous and over serious; they do not spill out pious patches of "fine writing." It is as if Harvey, in these portraits, could speak with a freedom and a maturity which his own voice does not allow him.

We read about a Ladakhi "oracle," a frail old woman who spits and shrieks with bone-chilling authority when the trance is upon her. Later we read about an Indian couple, Dilip and Moneesha, who are funny, wise, and extremely touching. They have come to Ladakh to see a Tibetan master, Tucksey Rinpoche. Dilip is a worldly businessman educated in England who, late in life, has been possessed by a thirst for spiritual knowledge. Dilip is everything Harvey himself is not: funny and contradictory, touchingly personal, wise with a sad detachment, yet passionate too. Dilip is, perhaps, the most memorable presence in *A Journey in Ladakh*; more memorable even than the lovely figure of the Rinpoche himself who becomes the goal and fulfillment of Harvey's search. Tucksey Rinpoche is a happy, earthy man who gives off no glimmer of any higher state; he is solidly himself, whether he is acting his part in a public ceremony, or meeting Harvey with almost childlike pleasure in his private room. These meetings with Dilip and the Rinpoche are perhaps inadvertently the culmination of *A Journey in Ladakh*. In them, Harvey manages to free himself of the portentousness which, unfortunately, mars so much of his book.

PAUL ZWEIG

Paul Zweig is chairman of the comparative literature department at Queens College and author of *Walt Whitman: The Making of the Poet*, to be published by Basic Books in the spring.

BRIEF REVIEW

Cold Heaven by Brian Moore

(Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 265 pp., $14.95)

Book by book, Brian Moore has been building a body of work that is, in its quietly impressive way, about as good as that of any novelist writing today in English. *Cold Heaven* is his thirteenth novel, and one wonders why he is not better known to the public. To this day, he is usually remembered as the author of *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, his first book—and perhaps also for *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, since back in the 1960s it was made into a little movie in which the late Robert Shaw gave his best performance.

Yet if Moore lacks the fame he deserves, he nevertheless has an excellent reputation. He is a writer's writer. His special virtues—his deft presentation of his characters, whether they be Irish, Canadian, or American, and the limpid simplicity of his style—are those that other writers most admire. Among the novelists who have singled him out for high praise is Graham Greene.

This last is significant, and not just because Greene is infamously sparing in his appreciation of his colleagues. No, coming from him it is in the nature of praise for an adversary. For on matters of religion, the two sit on opposite sides of the fence. Greene, the convert, has written often and subtly on the ambiguities of grace, salvation, and faith, but has always managed to do so within the bounds of what is acceptable in Catholic doctrine. Moore, the apostate, has written of them with equal subtlety in *An Answer from Limbo* and *Catholics*, yet done so in a way that challenges doctrine and the Church itself.

The difference between the two is probably most marked in *Cold Heaven*. It is a religious novel of a very peculiar sort. The conflict in it lies in the clash between the dogged secularity of the protagonist and the miraculous events in which she is made an unwilling participant. The closest thing to it is Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*. Yet the two novels are unlike in nearly every way that counts—in their sympathies, their conclusions, and in the personal value they place on the things of this world.

In *Cold Heaven*'s first couple of pages, Marie Davenport's husband Alex is severely injured in a boating accident in Nice. They are there on vacation and she was about to announce that she was leaving him for another man. A French doctor pronounces Alex dead at the hospital; she views the body, and indeed her husband is dead. There will be an autopsy the next day, and then she will be free to take the body back to America. But the following morning, there is no body. The trolley on which it had lain in the hospital morgue is empty; only the sheet that covered Alex is there.

The theft of Alex's body—or is it his resurrection?—is tied to an experience that she had had a year before. Outside a seaside motel near Carmel, California, she had had a vision of the Blessed Virgin and been instructed to "tell the priests" that "a place of pilgrimage" was to be built at that spot. Marie Davenport, devoutly secular and an adultress, wanted no part of such a bewildering and potentially embarrassing business. She did *not* tell the priests, and one year later, to the day, her husband died.

Driven back to that same motel, bullied by grace and in pursuit of a figure

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that may or may not be her dead husband, she at last gives in and cooperates with the Divine. Yet when she does, she finds her problems have just begun. Through this and all that follows, Marie fights to maintain her distance from it all. She may be chased by the Hound of Heaven, may even be run to ground and forced to do His will, but she herself remains essentially unchanged by the experience, determined to save herself from salvation. It is this that lends Brian Moore's bizarre tale a certain odd sense of veracity—one that is missing from *The End of the Affair*.

It *is* a bizarre tale, yet it is told with a convincing directness and with all the intensity and urgency of a thriller. In a way that is just what it is. *Cold Heaven* is a kind of metaphysical chase novel in which the meager prize won by the survivor is selfhood retained, a fragile identity kept intact.

BRUCE COOK

Bruce Cook's most recent book is *Brecht in Exile* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, a New Republic book).

TRB, *from page 4*

the 400 owe at least some of their wealth to this kind of activity. It is not socially useless: corporate predators and dealmakers in their ghoulish way keep markets efficient and managements alert. But they're hardly the better-mousetrap-makers of myth.

Another 14 of the top 400 fortunes are based largely on the existence of big government. Daniel K. Ludwig, listed as the third richest man in the country, made his first billion mostly by building ships for the Navy. The Bechtels, senior and junior, got there with a construction firm that specializes in government-sized projects such as dams, nuclear power plants, and airports. These government activities may be money well spent. But if so, you cannot offer the fortunes they created as evidence that money is better left in private hands. The other eleven government-based fortunes come from ownership of radio and TV licenses, fantastically valuable commodities that the government insanely gives away to a lucky few.

Eliminating all these categories (and eight fortunes I couldn't place), I count 107 out of the Forbes 400—about one out of four—who acquired their money in roughly the way Ronald Reagan, George Gilder, and Malcolm Forbes like to imagine. Even among these, almost half had a considerable head start, like Forbes himself. Also like Forbes himself, almost all have been helped by various government policies. Forbes has profited from years of low postage rates for magazines, subsidized by first-class mail users. Most of his high-visibility, extravagant life-style is tax-deductible as a "business expense." Such policies may be wise or not, but keep them in mind the next time a rich friend carries on about the burden of welfare.

Fifty-nine of the 400—barely one out of eight—seem really to have built their fortunes from scratch. This includes some genuine Horatio Alger stories, such as Kyupin Hwang, a Korean immigrant who arrived here fifteen years ago with $50, founded a computer company, and is now worth $575 million. It also includes anyone I could find who started with no more than an upper-middle-class upbringing, a good education, and a few thousand dollars. (It even includes a few like Bob Guccione, founder of *Penthouse*, who got rich by inflaming and satisfying desires most conservatives would rather see repressed.) These happy few really do deserve to enjoy their good fortune. They may reach me care of this publication if they need any advice about how.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

lished by TNR (and hasn't been a contributing editor in that time) because we had been convinced, as his contribution to the Hersh book now confirms, that the personal animuses he carried around made his writings altogether predictable and hence unreliable.

Hersh's defenders are driven to sleight of hand. Yes, there are twelve interviewees cited for the first chapter and seven for the second. But why stop there? There are none cited for the last chapter, three for the one before, two for the one before that, two again for the previous one, and so on. There are other chapters without cited interviewees, and some names are repeated. The thousand interviewees are just plain razzle-dazzle. Ten pages of the Hersh book, by the way, are devoted to Biafra, not five; and since these ten are certifiably slippery, a prudent reader should be aware of the rest.

My dispute with Hersh is not merely, as Mr. Cohen says, about whether Kissinger could have done more for the Biafrans. Everybody could have done more, perhaps even Roger Morris—who may have done the most; Morris could, for example, have made his complaints public rather than summon them up *post hoc*. But at that point, of course, Morris had no grievances against Kissinger: he was grateful for Kissinger's "trust and support." My difference with Hersh is the conclusion he reaches—a palpably false one—which says that Kissinger "behaved 'the worst' of all senior officials in the Nixon administration," and which pins Biafra's agony on him. Mr. Cohen makes explicit the implicit logic of Hersh's argument: that Kissinger was willing to disobey the pro-Biafran instructions of none other than President Nixon in order not to offend the Under Secretary of State, Elliot Richardson. That this inherently implausible argument should now be made by someone who has been charging for years that there was literally nothing Kissinger wouldn't do to please and flatter Nixon is just one measure of how the animus has distorted the history.

SPOILED MYSTERY

To the editors:

When I read Umberto Eco's *The Name of of the Rose* in Italy last fall, my greatest delight, among many, was in the genius of Eco's choice of the book which is central to the mystery. So I was appalled when Sven Birkerts chose to reveal its identity in his review ("An Uncommon Mystery," TNR, September 5). He may have felt justified, since *The New York Times*'s reviewer had committed the same offense several weeks earlier, and in his lead, no less. Still, such an act not merely betrays an insensitivity to the prospective reader, but seriously calls into question the reviewer's understanding of the nature of the mystery novel. I assume one of your editors read this review before it went to press. He should have deleted Mr. Birkerts's irresponsible reference to "the deadly book in the library." You have been equally irresponsible. I am furious.

MICHAEL SHERBERG
Olivette, Missouri

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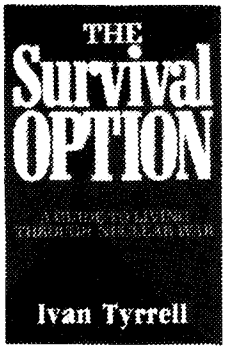

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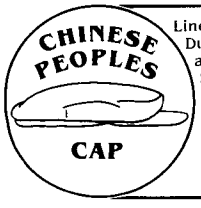

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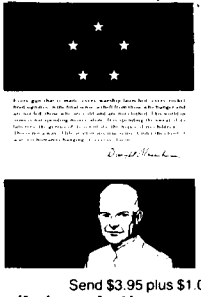

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Shame

DIPLOMATS, WE'RE TOLD, are people paid to lie for their country; every country's diplomats do it. So are there no differences among them? A friend of mine, who once served as a member of the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly, observed recently that even there the envoy who has just delivered a dishonest speech—"it happens routinely"—is not likely to stick around in the delegates' lounge waiting for plaudits from colleagues. He will look sheepish, he will behave squeamishly, he will have experienced shame. Not so the Soviet delegates, my friend noted. I'd never before thought that the capacity for shame might illuminate a significant distinction between the competing ideologies and systems of government in the world today, but I thought of this again as the downing of Flight 007 was debated at the United Nations.

WHAT MR. ANDROPOV'S emissaries demonstrated was that their system simply won't permit what would be axiomatic for Americans had the United States been responsible for a tragedy like the one that befell those 269 innocents over the Japan straits. Such a heavy responsibility would have immediately activated three traits that are deep within our culture. The first would be the Christian impulse to confession—a sharp contrast with the Soviet reflex of accusation. The second would be the habit of democratic self-criticism: a commission would even be appointed and charged with the question, "Where did *we* go wrong?" Instead the Soviets recriminated, even in contradictory ways. The third trait that would come into play would be the chivalric conviction that honorable amends are due. Can you imagine the Soviets doing that? Even when the Bulgarians shot down an El Al flight in 1955, they apologized and paid compensation. When in 1973 the Israelis—in a state of war with Libya and continually threatened by ever more reckless terrorist actions, many sponsored by Libya—downed a Libyan airliner, they apologized, paid reparations, and, we learn from *The Economist* of September 10, tried to involve the Arabs in an investigation of the incident so that it would never be repeated. Such an inquiry is unthinkable when it comes to the Soviets, because it would require what they fear most: on-site inspection. Theirs is a paranoid political culture. Like most people, they won't admit to deceit, but they are unable even to admit to error. This inability is not politics but character deformation.

PUBLICATIONS DON'T LIKE to admit their mistakes, either. Still, most do. *The New York Times*, for example, prints several hundred corrections a year. You'll find many (too many) corrections in TNR, too. But you can read *The New Yorker* for years on end without ever encountering an admission of error. The magazine cultivates an annoying air of omniscient infallibility, as if to question anything that has been approved by its famous fact-checking department is also to question whether the advertised jewels are really rare, the crystal really classic, the cashmere really kitten soft, the silk underwear really unrestricting, and the Blackglama really a legend at all, or—like some of what has turned up of late in those endless columns of print between the baubles and the bubbly—simply false. On the rare occasions when *The New Yorker* sees no alternative but to concede to having dispensed misinformation, it generally does so through a "Department of Amplification." This Orwellian euphemism suggests not that something was wrong, but that something was merely missing. In the issue of August 15, 1983, *The New Yorker*'s editors refer us all the way back to a two-part essay a year ago this month by Jacobo Timerman on the war in Lebanon: "Mr. Timerman wrote, 'This is what I try to do in Tyre and Sidon as I gaze on these ancient cities, reduced to ruins in a couple of weeks,' and, 'Is this enough to enable me to converse with the ruins of Tyre and Sidon. . . .?' Some of our readers took these and other statements to mean that the Israelis had totally destroyed the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Neither Mr. Timerman nor *The New Yorker* intended to give this impression. . ." Really? Then why didn't they they just use the word "damaged," which is how they characterized what happened to Tyre and Sidon in their "amplification"? As it happens, where the editors and checkers found Timerman too brazenly false, they did clean up his manuscript, though of course they don't say so. As submitted, for example, it read at one point: "For the first time, Israel destroyed entire cities: Tyre, Sidon, Damur, Beirut." Knowing this to be false, they changed the sentence to: "For the first time, Israel has shelled towns and cities on a large scale: Tyre, Sidon, Beirut." (Damur was dropped entirely from the list, presumably because someone learned that Damur had been almost totally destroyed by the P.L.O. some seven years earlier.) Another change: from the manuscript's ". . . the Israeli Air Force bombed open cities without anti-aircraft defenses . . ." to the magazine's ". . . the Israeli Air Force dropped its bombs. . . ." By this time, it ought to have dawned on the editors that Timerman was not to be trusted. *Pace* their "amplification," they must have known that the impression he wanted to give is the one they now deny. After all, there is no dispute about whether there were attacks on "open"—that is, undefended—cities. I had never expected Timerman's book to be reliable, since he spent less than a day in Lebanon. But I hadn't quite imagined that he suffers from the most critical character deformation that can afflict a journalist: dishonesty. This is an affliction that cannot be cured by editors, and William Shawn—"Mr. Shawn"—knows it. Yet no sooner has his magazine amplified itself than it sins yet again, and about as wildly, against the truth in the Middle East. The September 19 issue carries a sixty-column, 600-inch profile by John Newhouse of King Hussein, a press agent's portrait of the kind usually reserved for the likes of, say, Oscar de la Renta. Justifying the Jordanian annexation of what has come since 1949 to be called the West Bank, Newhouse writes of the Palestinian Arabs, "it seemed to them a better alternative than being taken over by Israel." But those weren't the alternatives, as surely even Mr. Shawn must know. The real option, adopted as the Partition Plan for Palestine by the United Nations and fully accepted by the Zionists, was an independent Arab state alongside the Jewish state. It was this alternative which was foreclosed by the Jordanian annexation and which Newhouse now tries to bury in his distorted history. Another falsehood: "Only Hussein has been willing to shoulder the risk of encouraging a negotiated settlement." Try amplifying that.

M.P.

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A full carat or more. Halfway isn't your style.

Your jeweler can show you many diamond solitaires of a carat or more. This necklace features a 2.65 carat diamond.

A carat or more—one in a million.

Every diamond is rare.
But of all diamonds found, a solitaire of a carat or more is only one in a million.

And, like love, becomes more precious with time.

A miracle among miracles.
Born from the earth. Reborn on a woman.

The extraordinary diamond of a carat or more.

Show the world you couldn't have made it without her.

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